The Dissertation Committee for Claudia Nicoleta Câmpeanu Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Material Desires: Cultural Production, Post-Socialist Transformations, and Heritage Tourism in a Transylvanian Town

Committee:

Pauline T. Strong, Supervisor

Kamran A. Ali

Kate Caterall

Richard Flores

John Hartigan Jr.

Kathleen Stewart

Material Desires: Cultural Production, Post-Socialist Transformations, and Heritage Tourism in a Transylvanian Town

by

Claudia Nicoleta Câmpeanu, Licențiată, M.Sc.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May, 2008

Dedication

Pentru mama, tata şi Cristi

Acknowledgements

This dissertation is not mine only. While I take full responsibility for all its errors and shortcomings, I believe that I owe every gram of brilliance, truth, and beauty in it to the people that have selflessly brought me to this moment in my life.

Five years ago, when I insisted that I want to pursue a doctorate in Anthropology and not in anything else, one person took a chance on poor confused me and supported my acceptance into the program: Pauline Turner Strong. Like a stern but supportive academic mother, she encouraged and guided me along, even when I doubted myself, I felt discouraged and ready to quit. Thank you, Polly, for believing in me, for being patient with the countless crying sessions in your office, and for being an inspiring feminist model.

The rest of my dissertation committee has been just important. Kamran Asdar Ali, the one specialist in *everything* that the department has, has served as my make-shift Eastern European anthropology consultant. Thank you, Kamran, for helping me face my own work, critically, and for stirring in me the desire to write for discipline-wide audiences. And, thank you for your always good spirits. John Hartigan Jr. came later into the writing process, but made up with his sincere enthusiasm for my project and its significance. Thank you, John, for your encouragement and also for reminding me, with your presence, that what I am producing *is* social science. Richard Flores, whose

Marxism seminar I took in 2001, left a significant and helpful dent in my thinking. Richard, you might not remember this, but you were the one that ordered me (hence the ensuing tears) to focus on what *I* wanted to do. Which I consequently did. Kathleen Stewart has been, for me, a model. Katie, I indirectly owe you the courage to be honest in my writing, to face and take responsibility for my own analysis. Lastly, I would like to thank Kate Caterall for her warm and patient involvement.

If my writing ever shines, is convincing, moving, and clear, is because one person convinced me that I should trust my writing instincts and, at the same time, be my most merciless editor. We haven't kept in touch, John Trimble, but you are always present when I write.

With this dissertation, I extracted stories, feelings, and truths out of a community that has welcomed me, so far, for twenty-one months. Dear people of Sighişoara, I made a career out of you, and will never be able to return this favor. In particular, I would like to thank the friends I made there and hopefully keep for the rest of my life: Nicoleta and Sebastian Anghel, Meli Matei, Ofelia Pop, Volker and Victorița Reiter, Maria Şoaită, Meli and Attila Zsigmond, Johannes Halmen, Ben Mehedin, Vasile Muntean, Alex Goța, and many others who have welcomed me into their lives and stories.

My greatest debt goes to my family, and especially to my parents, Corina and Constantin Câmpeanu. Dragii mei, nici nu va puteți imagina ce a însemnat pentru mine dragostea şi sprijinul vostru. Fără să puneți nici un fel de condiții, ați crezut în mine orbeşte atâția ani, cu toate că nu am realizat ceea ce ştiu că voi vă doreați pentru mine. Iertați-mă că am fost departe de voi toți anii ăştia, şi iertați-mă că v-am lăsat, cu egoism, să vă sacrificați. Nu ştiu dacă a meritat, dar, acum că am ajuns la capătul acestui drum, vă mulțumesc din tot sufletul şi vă dedic vouă tot ceea ce am realizat. E meritul vostru—

de când am fost mică m-ați făcut să cred că pot realiza tot ceea ce îmi propun, că sunt deşteaptă şi talentată.

Cristi, oriunde ai fi, să ştii că lucrarea asta e pentru tine. Înainte să te duci, mi-ai spus să învăț bine, şi asta am încercat să fac. Am încercat să realizez ceea ce ştiu că tu ai fi realizat mai bine, mai repede, şi cu mai mult talent. Îmi pare rău că nu ai avut timp, şi că nu eşti cu noi să te bucuri.

Unchiu Virgil, îți mulțumesc şi ție pentru sprijinul moral şi pentru verile petrecute la tine în curte—fără ele, nu aş fi avut putere să termin.

I would also like to thank my second family, here, in Texas, the Strain-Kearns-Horne-Bylander-Woodward-Leiser-Graham clan. They have warmly adopted me and offered me a physical and emotional home for more than eight years. Rachel, thank you for being such a wonderful and reliable friend, for your patience, and for taking my dreams seriously. Karen Strain, Peggy Horne, Susan Kearns, Colleen Woodward, Debbie Leiser, Marty Bylander, Michael Strain—thank you for all the holidays, little trips, gifts, and meals, thank you for so generously including me and keeping me sane and happy when I missed my home and family. This is your dissertation, too.

It took me three years to produce this document, and much of this time was spent thinking and talking and thinking and trying out ideas, stealing precious time and energy from two wonderful friends and writing partners, Melissa Biggs Coupal and Christine Labuski. I know that without you two this wouldn't have happened—without your encouragement and sincere involvement, I might have given up, who knows. I will always remember our writing group mornings at JP's. Melissa, you might not know this, but your precise and intelligent writing has served as a model for me. Thank you for being a warm and inspiring friend, and thank you for welcoming me into your home and family.

Chris, I built this dissertation with the emotional strength and the self-confidence I received from you in this past year. You served as an example of strength, intelligence, and feminist conviction, and I will always be grateful to you for showing me how to be the strong woman that I've become. Thank you for your generous friendship, for constantly reminding me that I am worth and capable, and thank you for making me part of your life, with all the good and the bad.

Other friends have contributed to this dissertation with their selfless and joyous support. Emily Lynch and Meg Gibson, in particular, have lent supportive ears, encouraged me along the way, and been a comforting shoulder to cry on whenever I needed it. Emily and Meg, I value you friendship and I will always keep it close to my heart. Rhonda Ohm and Chris Owen were the people that reminded me—with their creativity, generosity, and realness—to be true and loving to myself. Rhonda and Chris, thank you for accepting me the way I am. I would like to also thank a dear friend, Beth Bruinsma-Chang, for being a calming presence and an example of maturity in my life. The list of the people that have touched my life in these past few years could continue for several more pages. I will mention just some of them here, with my apologies to those that I left out: Can Aciksoz, Sergio Acosta, Afra Al-Mussawir, Ronda Brulotte, Alice Campbell, Jenny Carlson, Terra Edwards, Tessa Farmer, Simeon Floyd, Melissa Forbis, Mathangi Krishnamurthy, Elizabeth Leflore, Jerry Lord, Ken MacLeish, Ozlem Okur, Alisa Perkins, Rachael Pomerantz, Virginia Raymond, Halide Velioglu, Ramon Versage, Scott Webel, Mark Westmoreland. I send my thanks to my friends back home, who have served as an anchor, and offered a sweet emotional place to return to, even though I was not a constant presence in their lives: Raluca Mănişor, Camelia Husar, Radu Dredeţean, Voichiţa Maican, Mihai Dragomir, and many others. Vă mulţumesc că îmi aduceţi aminte cine sunt şi de unde vin. I also thank the crazy and weird people from the 21st

street co-op for welcoming and loving me, and teaching me that restraint and shame are sometimes overrated.

The Department of Anthropology at the University of Texas has been my comforting institutional home for the past five years. I would like to recognize the contribution of everybody in the department, and in particular the contribution of the staff, who modestly and diligently keep the wheels turning so that people like me can have the luxury to just sit, think, and read: Pam Becker, Adriana Dingman, Jenni Jones, Heather Nathanson-Flowers, Amy Hendrick, Billy O'Leary, Gabby Yearwood, Andi Shively, and Elaine Hrissikopoulos.

Much of this dissertation was written at a table in the Perry-Castañeda Library, JP's coffee house, or at the Flightpath—I am grateful that those places exist and I thank all the people that make them keep going and available.

Lastly, I owe my mental and emotional health to Ani, Liam, Gracie, Tess, Texas, and Țiță, who, all these years, have loved me unconditionally and made me want to be a better human.

Material Desires: Cultural Production, Post-Socialist Transformations, and Heritage Tourism in a Transylvanian Town

Publication No._____

Claudia Nicoleta Câmpeanu, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2008

Supervisor: Pauline T. Strong

This dissertation explores the transformation of a small town in South East Transylvania, Sighişoara, historically defined through a strong German presence. Despite the small number of Germans remaining in the region after the massive migrations of the last decades, historical German privilege (made visible through and materialized in the long-lasting architecture) is reformulated and re-configured in the present precisely through processes connected to valuing and producing this built landscape as historical heritage. Claims for stakes in the development of the area become entangled with an interest in heritage preservation publicly performed by a diverse set of (mostly foreign) actors. By analyzing a failed development project, the gentrification of the historical citadel, transformations in public spaces, and NGO and historical preservation funding, I argue that Germanness offers a discursive space in which local desires for a developed West are able to articulate, productively, with Western nostalgias for a developmental do-over, as well as with fears for an endangered European heritage at the 'margins' of Western civilization.

This dissertation contributes to the anthropology of post-socialist transformations in Eastern Europe by drawing attention to the relationship between ethnicity and participation in a global capitalism. It shows how a continuous, living engagement with the "outside," the "West," with consumer capitalism has been part of local quotidian subjectivities and understandings of the world, all mediated by desire and access to mobility and possibility. Understandings of people's current relationship with development, consumption, the idea and reality of capitalism cannot be disentangled from these continuities, and I argue for locating analysis precisely in these relationships.

This dissertation also brings a critical native voice to the body of English-language Eastern European anthropology. At the same time, it attempts to both build on and disrupt historical approaches to the region by forging analytical and substantive continuities with discipline-wide approaches to ethnicity, development, and heritage tourism.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Illustrations

Introduction

SETTING THE STAGE: IN THE CITADEL

It was about five in the afternoon, and I was walking home, down the narrow Muzeului Street. By then, I had been living in Sighişoara—a mere 50 km from my own home town, Tg. Mureş—for almost eleven months. Someone called me right as I passed the Venetian house and entered the small square in front of the Clock Tower. "You're only going home now, so late in the day?" Lia, Zsuzsi, and two other women were sitting right around the corner, in the street, on old lawn chairs lined with folded blankets that kept away the coolness of the approaching April evening. They were mostly facing each other, chatting while paying a distracted kind of attention to the possibility of tourists—potential customers for Zsuzsi's husband's paintings. The paintings, mainly watercolors of Sighişoara, were hung on four wooden and cloth stands leaning against the stairs that led up to the German Forum entrance.

One of the women, visibly pregnant and the only one who didn't live in the citadel, stood up and left, leaving behind a plate with pizza remnants. We chatted for a while and almost didn't notice Hermann coming out of the Forum building. I asked him how he was doing, expecting an elaborate response and a prolonged participation in our chatting—we'd had long, involved conversations before. He did stop to talk to us, but seemed very stiff and a bit uncomfortable, stiffer than usual, anyway. He obviously wasn't in a chatty mood this time, and just stood there, awkwardly, with us, for a minute or so, without saying much. He didn't quite look directly at any of us, either, keeping his head high and moving his eyes to the side, over and around all of us.

Illustration 1: *Piața Muzeului* (the Museum Square), seen from the Clock Tower. The green building on the right, also known as *Casa Venețiană* (the Venetian House), hosts the German Forum. ZsuZsi's paintings are resting against its lower wall. The yellow house in the back, left, is *Casa Vlad Dracul*, presented to tourists as "Dracula's birth place."

"He's checking up on us," both Zsuzsi and Lia said in a choir after he left, and Lia rushed to explain defensively, as if Hermann had still been there, that she just brought pizza for the pregnant woman "because I know she would crave it if she saw me eating."

I felt, somehow, very Romanian at that moment, under Hermann's imagined gaze. His awkwardness and Lia's defensive fretting made visible, if only for a second, the uneven ethnic landscape that we all inhabited, in our own ways, the chasm that Lia jumped to fill up with her words, and I with my then unarticulated humiliation. Suddenly Romanianness seemed to make a different kind of sense, in between Hermann's felt German gaze and the pizza remnants on the chair indexing a world out of a desirable order. Lia was Romanian, as well, and Zsuzsi was partly Hungarian, but in those self-protective moves, all that mattered was that we did not feel German. I asked the women what they meant by "checking up," and Zsuzsi responded that "they" (from the German Forum, the local German political organization) would often glance at them, as they walked up and down the stairs to the entrance, leaning to the side "to see if everything is neat and clean." "You don't know who to trust anymore," she continued. "I went to the German parish [the owner of the building] and they said that they will support us, will let us stay here, and sell our paintings in front of the building. But, I think, these from the German Forum don't like us here, would rather see us gone."

Zsuzsi's uncertainty was a product of her sensed vulnerability in the face of the local Romanian administration, and also a product of the fear that her hopes and desires for a German benevolence might not be realized. She recognized, in part, the German moral stewardship of the space, but in the same time felt caught between feelings of entitlement and inadequacy about her own presence in that very spot.

At the last Local Council meeting, it had been decided that all souvenir vendors, including the painters, will be moved to Piața Cetății, the larger square in the citadel. Zsuzsi said that she went again to the German parish, asking for help, but, "they were being fishy and avoiding the subject. So they won't help us."

Zsuzsi didn't want to go and sell her paintings in the square, a mere 50 meters away. It is going to be too busy, she said. And she didn't want to mix with the other vendors, either. "This is art, this is culture," she said pointing grandly to the paintings, "it's not bazaar, like those vendors have in Piața Cetății. Just imagine how it will be there…, beer, and food, where will they put us?" She got all worked up:

> We are helping the town, we are promoting the town, somebody buys a painting and takes it home and shows it to other people. These want to move us to the square or to I don't know which street, by the citadel wall. Here is where we have to be, where we work, where the places that we are representing are. I went to other countries and this is how it was. But since these (pointing towards the Forum building) are in power, I can't really complain, because I also voted for them…

The Forum people were not quite in power—they only had three seats of the nineteen in the Local Council, theoretically representing the 600 Germans left in a town of 30,000 inhabitants. But, Zsuzsi wasn't completely misguided in her observation, either. She was pointing towards a gravitational core that just started to take, again, palpable shape, to be visibly articulated, beyond desires and projections, an enabling space with more centripetal value than any identity attached to Sighişoara and its surroundings. She felt uneasy about her own position, living off a heritage that wasn't her own. And, in the same time, she understood her own contribution to the production of this built landscape into valuable heritage to be consumed and to generate all kinds of wealth. Her precarious and insistent presence in that spot accessed dilemmas, contradictory desires, and incongruous arrangements that are at the core of the

transformations currently taking place in Sighişoara. These desires, dilemmas, and transformations are what this dissertation is about.

A READING GUIDE: QUESTIONS, FIELDWORK, ARGUMENTS

I opened this introduction with a story that I lay, symbolically, on top of existing tropes and narratives about post-socialist Transylvania, tropes and narratives that have been circulated, for the past fifteen years, in both the anthropological literature and the public sphere, in general. I admit that I rooted my initial impulse for this project in a partial inability to recognize myself and my experience in some of these accounts, despite their successes in identifying and analytically capturing important, fundamental socio-economic processes. My intention is not to oppose or contradict these accounts, but rather to build on the truths that they are accessing, to complicate them, and to lend them the authority of lived experience.

The story introduces a dynamic that I would like to shed light on through this dissertation: ethnicity as situational and lived, as happening under our eyes, dependent on local and regional histories, but also on recent and economic developments. In a region in which Romanians are not only the majority, but also theoretically in power (politically and economically), being Romanian does not guarantee experiencing and living life at the top of local ethnic arrangements. Through Lia and Zsuzsi's discomfort, through my personal discomfort, you can get a glimpse into the gaping difference between the two ethnic orders that I anchored my story in.

This story also opens my discussion of how we could think about current "post-socialist transformations" in ways that complicate the macro-scenarios of social and economic collapse and transition and capture the confusion and complexity of everyday life.

I would also want this story to set the tone for how I think the rest of the dissertation should be read. Writing this dissertation has been, for me, a journey of discovery, of trying to figure things out, not only intellectually, but also emotionally. Therefore I think it should be read as a trace of that inherently messy and imperfect process, and not as some kind of definitive treatise on development, ethnicity, or capitalism in an Eastern European town. It is, I think, most convincing in the places where it embraces this sincere curiosity and dwells in a mode of analysis that is comfortable with gaps, misunderstandings, awkward relationships, and differences. I allow myself to be inspired by moments like the one I described above, while I attempt to access local truths, through shared experiences, histories, and emotional memories.

I write as a Romanian, born and raised in the area (mostly in Tg. Mureş, the county seat, about 50 kilometers north of Sighişoara) until the age of twenty-two, whose relationship with "home" has been disrupted and complicated by almost ten years of residence and study in the US. I thus add my personal history to the formal fieldwork that I conducted for the purpose of writing this dissertation.

The questions that stood at the basis of this project were concerned with understanding how Sighişoara and the region surrounding it fit into a globalized cultural and economic reality, and how local processes articulate with translocal flows of money, people, and ideas. If the current transformations in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe have been discussed mainly in terms of inner processes (contained within national economies and their shaken structures) how can we enlarge that conversation to account for increasingly intensified connections with and integration into a global capitalism? How is capitalism expanding into these spaces, how is it experienced? How is this experience particular to certain regions, situations, subjects?

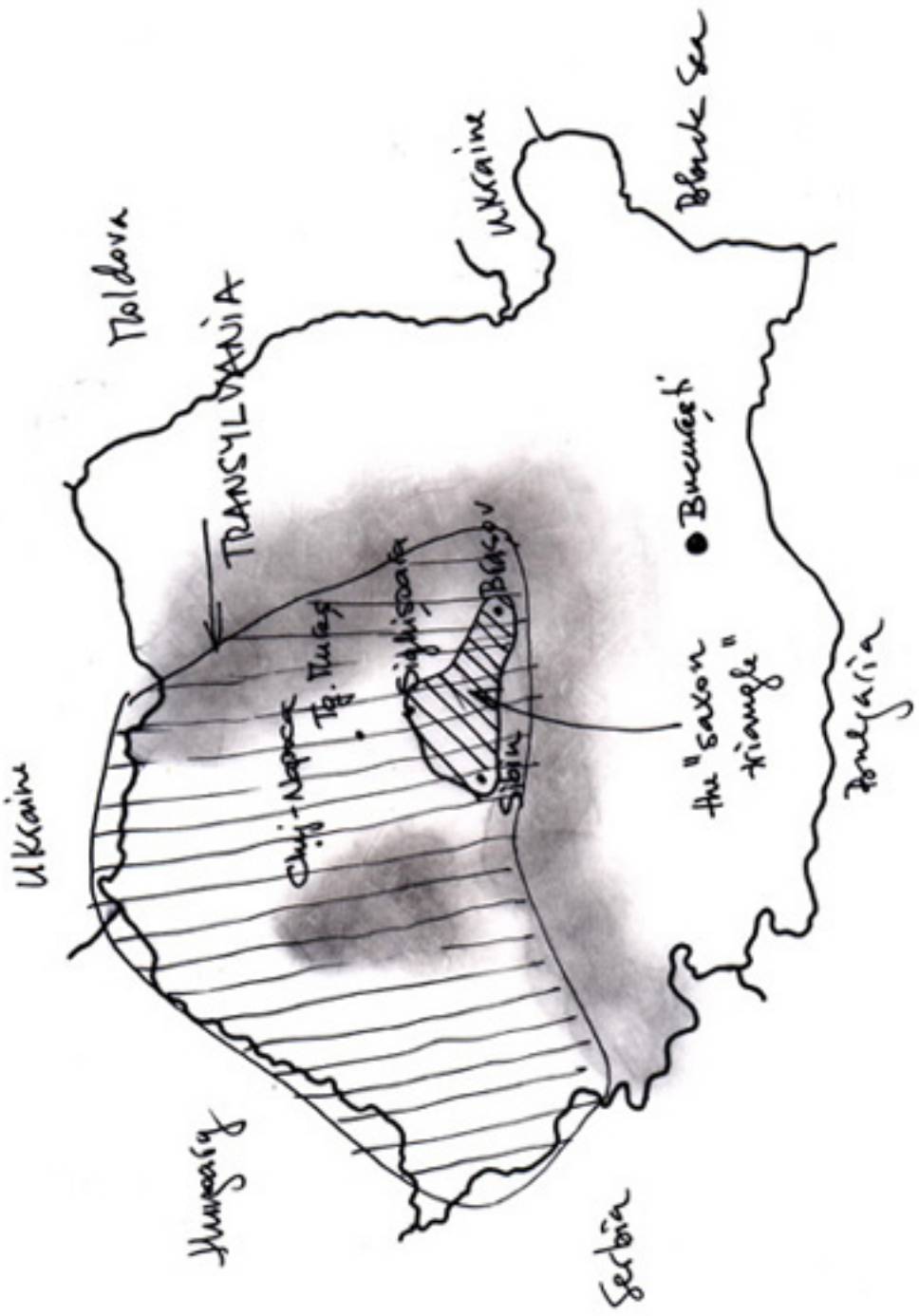


Illustration 2: Map of Romania, outlining Transylvania and the "Saxon Triangle."

Sighişoara and the so-called "Saxon triangle" (the region surrounding it) seemed like a privileged space to explore these questions. A town of 32,000, it is located in an area that doubly complicates the story of Romania's transformation: it is not only part of the ethnically contested Transylvania (in between the Romanian and the Hungarian nations), but also part of an area historically dominated by a third ethnic group, Germans who have settled the region in the twelfth century. What has taken, publicly, the face of ethnic identity, struggles, and politics, actually has a material substratum. I argue that this material stratum has both historical and current relevance, in particular within the contemporary national concerns with reparation, restoring pre-WWII class arrangements, guaranteeing property and entrepreneurial rights. As the section on ethnicity in Transylvania will show, ethnic arrangements articulate in very significant ways with historical arrangements in the distribution of property, of commercial, labor, and political rights, which all map analytically very well with what we could refer to as historical class arrangements. In the same time, I suggest that there are other ways in which ethnicity becomes significant in the area, through processes mediated by participation in a global capitalism and working through subjectivities, desires, and imaginations.

More concretely, then, I am exploring the issue of global capitalism at the intersection of the so-called post-socialist transformations in Romania and regional ethnic arrangements. Sighişoara's recent trajectory—in terms of economic development and public representations—has been stubbornly attached to tourism and to producing and valuing a German heritage that was both authentically local and globally intelligible. The hopeful fixation on German heritage is curious, considering that the local German population—the majority until the 1930s—has been reduced to an insignificant 600, less than 2% of the town's population. The material heritage, consisting of a square mile of old houses and walls, is also a small part of physical town.

I narrowed down my questions to trying to understand the significance and causes of the fixation on heritage tourism as a developmental strategy, in the context of the widely discussed "post-socialist transformations" and the intensified inclusion in a global capitalism.

In this dissertation, I am answering these questions by drawing attention to the productive relationships between ethnicity as a way to relate to the world, and material transformations, transformations in the local and regional political economy. I explore these relationships by looking at development projects, the gentrification of the historical citadel, transformations in public spaces, and the requests for sustainability connected to heritage preservation and NGO funding.

In a larger sense, this dissertation is about post-socialist 'transformations' in a small town in South East Transylvania (Romania), called Sighişoara. I argue that these transformations cannot be understood outside the cultural and social dynamics produced through gaps, lags, and differences (sensed or imagined) between the various ethnic and economic orders intersecting here. In between these orders, challenging and sustaining them, I see the productive force of desire, moving ideas, people, and money, physically transforming spaces or pushing them into particular kinds of stagnation.

I analytically built the project around the renewed and renegotiated Germanness of the region outside Sighişoara. This Germanness, I argue, is a privileged and illuminating lens for examining the processes connected to the uncomfortable and productive gaps that I have started outlining in this introduction, both in terms of ethnicity and position in the global project of capitalist expansion. In Sighişoara, tourism and heritage protection emerge—in very diverging ways—as tactical and strategic solutions invoked by different sets of actors that see themselves as having a stake in the development of the town and the region. Despite the small number of Germans

remaining in the area after the massive migrations of the last decades, historical German privilege (made visible through and materialized in the long-lasting architecture) is reformulated and re-configured in the present precisely through processes connected to valuing and producing this built landscape as historical heritage. Claims for stakes in the development of the area become entangled with an interest in heritage preservation publicly performed by a diverse set of (mostly foreign) actors. I argue that Germanness offers a discursive space in which local desires for a developed West are able to articulate, productively, with Western nostalgias for a developmental do-over, as well as with fears for an endangered European heritage at the 'margins' of Western civilization.

In both my analysis and my writing, I draw on my own experience living in the area and experiencing local life as an ethnically Romanian growing up in the socialist 1980s Romania. More formally, I conceived this project around an early interest in the Dracula Theme Park project, following its trajectory through conversations with friends and family and a surveying of the Romanian media coverage as the project controversy was unfolding and expanding beyond the limits of the town and the region (between 2001 and 2002).

In the summer of 2003, I visited Sighişoara with this project in mind, trying to articulate what at the time felt like confusing questions and analytical suspicions. I returned in June 2004 for formal fieldwork, living continuously in the town until the end of August the following year. I also spent the summers of 2006 and 2007 living in Sighişoara and Tg. Mureş, visiting with some of the friends I made there over the years.

Between 2004 and 2005 I worked for an NGO located in the historical citadel, and I got involved with other two as well as with the community life that surrounded their activity (meetings, public events, workshops, etc.). Since work was sometimes flexible in terms of schedule and my location, I got to spend a lot of time with residents of the

citadel, and also with people that worked in the area, in particular in tourist related activities. I conducted formal, taped interviews with members of the community that expressed their comfort and ease with being taped while discussing topics related to town politics (journalists, NGO workers, public figures), and I conducted informal interviews (conversations, often in public spaces) with people that were reluctant or felt inhibited about talking to me on tape. During my stay in Sighişoara between 2004 and 2005, I rented out rooms in other people's homes (twice) and rented out an apartment (the last three months), none of them in the citadel.

My personal history in the area often translated into tight relationships with people that turned out to be—after long conversations—either remote relatives of mine or of friends that I have made while growing up, attending school in Tg. Mureş or college in Cluj-Napoca. Therefore, I feel a heightened responsibility towards the people that I worked with in what I am now used to referring to as my "field." While representing them in this work, I assigned them pseudonyms, and sometimes omitted or added personal details to their stories in order to make them less recognizable, especially if their opinions were somewhat controversial. Still, I am afraid that, to the people caught in the middle of the events that I depict here, some of these characters and their stories could become recognizable. Therefore, I chose to use stories and opinions that have become property of the "community realm," and theoretically would not threaten anybody's well being.

SETTING THE STAGE: INCONGRUOUS ARRANGEMENTS, IRONY, AND MODERNITIES

As a prelude to her first ethnography, *Transylvanian Villagers*, Katherine Verdery recounts two jokes comparing Romanians, Hungarians, and Germans, jokes that inhabitants of the South Transylvanian village where she worked told about themselves and each other (p. 404). In a period of rising and stifling Romanian state nationalism, the jokes revealed a diverging, but persistent ethnic imaginary that placed Romanians at the bottom of a hierarchy with long, living roots in the history of the region[1]. I understood the jokes to be partly commentaries on the memory of these past arrangements, memories that the then current social and economic situation—more than thirty years into the state socialist project—hadn't erased. Germans were organized and entrepreneurial, Hungarians were courageous and quick to fight, and Romanians were lazy, immoral, and constantly thinking about theft[2]. Romanians were just as likely as Hungarians and Germans to tell and laugh at these jokes, to interject their daily speech with similar, self-deprecating remarks.

I suggest that jokes like these were able to exist and function not because the ethnic arrangements they invoked were the only, or even just a dominant, reality, but

---

[1] At the same time, this hierarchy completely erased, through silence, another group from history, the Romani.

[2] I reproduce the jokes here. The first one, collected in the 1880s, is very similar to the second one, collected in the 1980s. What I am emphasizing in my analysis above is the value of these jokes in *use*, the possibility for them to exist publicly in a time (in the 1980s) when Romanian nationalism was hegemonic. Magyar stands for Hungarian, and Saxon for German.

"A deputation consisting of a Magyar, a Saxon, and a Romanian was sent from Transylvania to Palestine to retrieve the body of the Savior. Upon reaching Jerusalem, they were dismayed to find the Sepulchre heavily guarded by numerous Roman soldiers, and they stopped to discuss what to do. The Magyar urged the others to let him cut into the soldiers at once with his sword, but the Saxon restrained him, observing that they were outnumbered and might be harmed: it would be wiser to try bartering for the body. The Romanian had still another solution: 'Let's wait until nightfall and then just steal it.'"

"What do you get if you put three Magyars together?

--An insurrection.

What if you put three Saxons together?

--An enterprise.

And if you put three Romanians together?

--A band of thieves."

because of the distance they signaled from the two projects of Romanian nationalism and state socialism. This space of apparent contradiction was, in the safest way, a space of irony, a space where "the 'ironic' solution of plural and separate meanings—the said together with the unsaid—[were] held in suspension (like oil and water)" (Hutcheon, 1994, p. 57). The jokes and remarks were making use of the safety of the seemingly inevitable, hegemonic Romanian nationalism (by suspending it), and the safe inconsequentiality of anything that might threaten or challenge it. I noticed the same semantic sensibility in what Alexei Yurchak called late socialist humor in the Soviet Union, which relied heavily on ignoring not the dominant order, but the very hegemony of its representation as well as people's simulation of assent to it. Unlike Mbembe's (1992) humor in the postcolony (which poked fun at power behind its back) or Scott's "weapons of the weak" (1985), the humor that Yurchak describes worked by exposing the "twofold structure of social reality and . . . one's relation to it. It exposed the coexistence of two incongruous spheres, official and parallel, and the subject's simultaneous participation in both, i.e., one's incongruous behavior and structure of consciousness" (Krylova, 1999; Yurchak, 1997, p. 180)[3]. For proud, nationalist Romanians, making self-disparaging (ethnic) remarks or laughing serenely when others were making them meant avoiding the obligation to recognize the very hegemony of Romanian state socialism, by not acknowledging how closely connected to and supportive of Romanian state nationalism it was. Assent to one was left conflated into the closely intertwined other, and avoided through the pretense of their misrecognition. Yurchak (1997, p. 163) calls this humor, quoting Sloterijk, "humor that has ceased to struggle" (1987, p. 305), being "an element written into the system itself, and not a way of resisting it" (Yurchak, 1997, p. 183).

[3] Also see Krylova (1999) for an analysis of Soviet and post-Soviet jokes.

But why, still, would an ethnically empowered Romanian accept and maybe even take pleasure in being the disadvantaged butt of the joke? One facile answer would be—as I suggested already—precisely because of her/his unthreatened dominance. I argue, however, that the explanation lies in a particular kind of subjectivity, born out of the incongruous and incomplete projects of modernity that people in Transylvania have historically been included in or excluded from. For Transylvanian Romanians, these richly layered projects of modernity (which I will outline in this introduction) were conveniently shot through with a careful cultivation of subaltern subjectivities and subaltern forms of agency. The socialist state, as in China, for example, invested in, authorized, and represented working class and peasant subaltern forms of public consciousness as the main way of constituting modernity (see Rofel, 1999). Also, the Romanian nationalist project relied heavily on emphasizing and creating historical continuities with a subjectivity of the (ethnically) oppressed people fighting for the right to a *nation* against scores and scores of oppressors. All this, building on the geographical and cultural location of the Transylvanian space—at the edge of Europe, the Enlightenment, and Western Christianity, in between East and West, never quite in, but not outside, either.

Irony was just one way to make this awkward gap visible, to perform it in some semi-public way, through the doubling that it entailed: on one side, a proud Romanian nationalism, and on the other, a feeling of historical inadequacy connected to being (Transylvanian) Romanian. This gap was made even more uncomfortable by the paralleled, sensed inadequacy of the developmental lag attached—after 1989 through public discourse and before 1989 through intimate perceptions and experiences—to the socialist past and the distance from a true capitalist future.

Gaps, awkward differences and misunderstandings, incongruous arrangements are at the center of my analysis in most of the chapters that follow, and in particular in the final chapter. I ask the readers to keep their curiosity attuned to these differences, and focus, in their reading, on what gets produced in those open spaces.

SIGHIŞOARA/SEGESVÁR/SCHÄßBURG—SHORT HISTORY

Telling the story of Sighişoara[4], as of any other place, is wrought with the cautions of the politics of writing history. Transparency, as well intended as it might be, does not suffice. This being said, I will outline the town's historical existence by pointing towards coordinates that will serve the readers in following and understanding my arguments.

We can trace the urban development of the town of Sighişoara (Segesvár in Hungarian and Schäßburg in German) first to a defense fort set up in the twelfth century by Szekely (a people closely related to Hungarians) to defend the new border of the Hungarian kingdom as well as an important commercial crossroads. Other sources (I. F. Pascu, 2005), echoing Romanian nationalist writings of Transylvanian history (Iorga, 1989; Mehedinți, 1986; S. Pascu, 1982), insist that older human settlements (pre-Roman and Roman) have existed in the area surrounding the town (also see Boia, 2001 for a review on retroactive readings of Romanian medieval history). The town history museum features pottery and other material remains of those communities, in an obvious gesture to trace continuities between the older pre-Romanian and Romanian population living here and the later Romanian claims on this land.

[4] From now on, I will use mostly the Romanian names of the places and regions I am referring to, to reflect both my positioning (a Romanian born and raised in the area) and my perspective.

The region around the fort (as most of South East Transylvania) was later settled—most probably in the first part of the thirteenth century—by colonists coming from Flanders, upper Rheinland, and the Mosel-Gebiet region. The fort was slowly transformed into one of the main settlements of the colonists. The colonists took advantage of the special liberties and privileges granted to them by the Hungarian kings and developed a flourishing community (Baltag, 2004; Machat, 2002).

Over the next centuries, the Germanic colonists monopolized most of the regional crafts production and a good size of the local commerce. Despite the fact that they did not come from Saxony, they came to be known as Saxons (Sachsen in German, Szászok in Hungarian, and Saşi in Romanian) and became one of the three privileged nations of Transylvania: the Saxons, the Hungarians (Magyar), and the Szekely. The privileges allowed Saxons to have a political voice in the government of Transylvania as well as a well-maintained political, economic, and religious autonomy in their areas of influence; this happened at the exclusion of the mostly-Romanian peasantry and serfdom. Katherine Verdery suggests that while these orders had an ethnic expression, they were not understood as such at the time (1983).

The region controlled by the Saxon in Southeast Transylvania roughly covered a 100 km long triangle anchored by the towns of Braşov (Kronstadt), Sibiu (Hermannstadt), and Sighişoara/Mediaş (Schäßburg/Mediasch), including urban settlements and self-sufficient (for centuries) Saxon rural communities.

The Sighişoara Saxons settled first on a hill above the Târnava Mare river, probably building a modest village around what is today Piața Cetății (the Citadel Square). They also established a church on the top of the hill (today's Church on the Hill) and a Franciscan monastery, mostly demolished to give way (in late nineteenth century) to the current Town Hall building. The Upper Town (the citadel) developed into

a fortified urban settlement, surrounded by walls and defense towers, and with a characteristic late medieval residential architecture (thick walls, fortified courtyards). In parallel, another settlement developed at the bottom of the hill, into what today is known as the Lower Town. The Lower Town, however, seemed to have maintained, at least until the nineteenth century, a rural character, with larger plots of land used for gardening and raising animals. The Lower Town also seemed to have been more inclusive, allowing Szekely and Romanians to settle as soon as the seventeenth century. The citadel—probably due to the commercial privileges afforded to the space—remained the economic, political, and religious center of town as well as the home of the Saxon elites (Machat, 2002).

Following the Reformation, the Transylvanian Saxons converted to Lutheranism, a political move that strengthened the ties between the hundreds of rural and urban communities speaking diverging dialects, and propelled High German as a unifying element of a larger—now understood as German—Transylvanian Saxon nation. The economic substratum of this transformation, as well as its reliance on the mass-available printed texts make this an interesting example for Benedict Anderson's explanation of the relationship between imagining nationhood and print capitalism (1991). During the same time, ties with the Western European Germanic space also started to sprout, and during the eighteenth century, a new wave of Germanic immigrants settled in the province, this time in the Western Transylvania. These newly settled Germans, also known as Swabians, imagined themselves as nationally connected to the older German colonists. Today, the two communities form, politically and culturally, the German ethnic minority in Romania.

The second half of the nineteenth century marked a weakening of the German privilege due to the reorganization of the Austro-Hungarian dual empire (Baltag, 2004).

The political autonomy of the German community was eliminated and its administration replaced with Hungarian institutions staffed with Hungarian speaking functionaries. This is the period when the former Franciscan monastery in the citadel was demolished, and a large administrative building was erected in its place. Although other several medieval buildings were demolished, as well, the citadel remained mostly intact, in the shape left after the reconstruction following the 1676 devastating fire. Around the same time, Sighişoara started expanding demographically and geographically, incorporating some nearby settlements and hamlets and also growing into an industrial center of the region. The former craft and artisan sector was transformed into an industrial one, with labor drawn from the nearby Romanian, Saxon, and Szekely villages.

The 1918 incorporation of Transylvania into the Romanian state opened new markets for the town industry, resulting into further economic and demographic growth. The Saxon population of Sighişoara formed the majority until the 1930s, when they were surpassed by Romanians coming from nearby villages. The Second World War proved disastrous for the local Saxons, many of them participating in the war on the German side, and many of those fortunate enough to return being deported to Siberia for the years after the war (Baltag, 2004).

The socialist period meant, for Sighişoara, profound transformations. Much of the residential, commercial, and industrial property of the town—Saxon in its majority—was nationalized. The industry was forcefully developed by extending the nationalized factories and workshops and creating new ones, in particular for textile and ceramics related activities. This economic development was sustained by massive in-migrations from both neighboring villages as well as other regions of Romania, to the extent that Sighişoara almost tripled in size in fifty years, to today's population of over 32,000. The ethnic balance was also severely tipped towards Romanians, which now account for 78%

of the population (the rest, 18% Hungarian, 2% Romani, and 2% German/Saxon)[5]. The Romanian and Hungarian in-migration was paralleled by the massive emigration of the local Saxons, leaving for Western Germany under a special accord, practically being sold by the Romanian state to a Germany economically booming and hungry for labor (Wagner, 2000). Those that were not able to leave before 1989 left in the early 1990s, leaving the current German population at less than 700.

Illustration 3: The Citadel in the background, and new construction in the Lower Town, along the Târnava Mare river.

[5] See the results of the 2002 census, updated for 2005: http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/pdf/ro/cap2.pdf

Physically, Sighişoara changed as well, expanding along the valleys surrounding the citadel hill with industrial zones, concrete apartment buildings, and further neighborhoods. During the floods of 1970 and 1975, part of the old Lower Town was affected, and the authorities at the time preferred to demolish many of the remaining constructions, raise a dyke around the river course, and build a number of socialist concrete buildings in an obvious gesture to alter the aesthetic character of the town. Many of the town inhabitants—both German and not—recount this move bitterly, pointing to the unfinished and uncommitted feel of the area right under the citadel and the Town Hall: one unfinished building from the 1990s, and unbuilt and unused terrain, covered in grass and weeds.

Illustration 4: The citadel (on the left) and new construction along the river.

Sighişoara's post-1989 trajectory is not all that different from that of many middle sized towns in Romania: a pronounced recession following the dismantling of the state-owned and planned economy, and a shy, but insistent re-orientation towards a locally-bred, and foreign (i.e. IMF, World-Bank, and EU) inspired version of capitalism. Many of the factories closed down, went bankrupt, or reduced their activity, with massive layoffs. In the mid 1990s, Italian entrepreneurs took advantage of the cheap, well trained workforce and opened textile sweatshops, which closed down once Chinese exports made them no longer competitive. Many people from Sighişoara chose to work (illegally, mostly) in various countries in Western Europe, returning home every few months to visit their families and rest. Tourist development took off with a serene insistence: houses (both in the historical center and outside it) being transformed into bed and breakfasts or *pensiuni*, and five larger hotels being built in and around Sighişoara. In 1999, the historical center of Sighişoara—along with several Saxon fortified churches in the area—was included on UNESCO's World Heritage List. A larger section of the town, as well as isolated constructions outside the historical center, were declared in 2004 protected historical monuments by the Romanian government[6].

This by now classic scenario of post-socialist transformation has been, however, warped and intensified here by an uneven and dynamically ordered ethnic landscape, lined—for many generations—with felt and imagined gazes and all kinds of desires. I opened the introduction with two attempts at outlining the contours of this ethnic landscape. In both cases, what I wanted to draw attention to were the gaps and spaces in between the different social orders at work, as well as the cultural labor needed to make them meet and recognize each other: on the one hand, Romanian state nationalism and

[6] *Ordinul nr. 3314/2004 al ministrului culturii şi cultelor privind aprobarea Listei monumentelor istorice, actualizată, şi a Listei monumentelor istorice dispărute*, published in *Monitorul Oficial al României, anul 172, nr 646 bis, din 16 iulie 2004*

Romanian state socialism, helping and sustaining each other, and on the other hand, a long standing ethnic hierarchy closely aligned with other West/East hierarchies.

TRANSYLVANIA

I use Transylvania to refer to the historical region situated in the Northwestern third of current Romania, bordering the Carpathian Mountains in the South and East. While now part of the Romanian national state, Transylvania has changed political and military hands several times in the past thousand years, most recently during the Second World War, when Hungary took over more than half of it, as reward for joining the war on the Axis side. Romania recovered it, also as a form of reward, for joining forces with the Soviet Union.

The defining moment in the contemporary history of the region was the Trianon Treaty (1919), when, part of the larger European project of drawing new national borders after the Austro-Hungarian collapse, Transylvania was assigned to Romania, to the dismay and horror of Hungarians everywhere. Trianon is remembered by Hungarians as historical trauma, and by Romanians as a long awaited moment of justice.

For hundreds of years, Transylvania existed as either an independent principality or as a province of Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, or the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Its population was ethnically diverse, with Hungarians, Romanians, Szekely, Germans, Romany, Jews, and other peoples spread all over its territory. This diversity has not been necessarily understood, historically, as an ethnic diversity, but rather as a stratification the corresponded to historically earned or granted political, commercial, and religious privileges. The three dominant "classes" were the Hungarians, Szekely, and Germans, while Romanians were relegated generally to the landless, or poor peasantry.

Transylvania is remembered and discussed even now as a disputed territory between two nations: the Romanians and the Hungarians (Szekely have been subsumed under it). In this dissertation, I draw attention to a small region within Transylvania, historically dominated by Germans, and tell a story of its present as complicated by multiple and intersecting ethnic and economic histories. Discussing Transylvania in between the Romanian and Hungarian nationalist projects misses not only the current complexity of it demographic make-up, but also how the region's developmental trajectory relied on political arrangements that worked not necessarily through conflict and contestation, but rather exclusion, inclusion, and desire.

Imagining Transylvania

Historically, as a part of Eastern Europe, and also at the margins of both Europe and the Balkans, Transylvania has had an identity marked not only by ethnic and national contestation, but also by ambiguity and possibility.

The contestation over the territory referred to by Hungarians as 'Érdely' and by Romanians as 'Ardeal' is a rather modern phenomenon, and can be tied to the rise of the nation-state as a relevant political framework on this side of the continent. The earlier (eighteenth century) Romanian movements for 'national' emancipation had at their core the intention of changes in consciousness, rather than actual requests for political and social changes, such as pushing for a union with Romanians across the mountains (Mitu, 2001). The second half of the nineteenth century, as most of the following century, was marked by a more explicit re-imagining of this space as vitally *national*, for both Romanians and Hungarians: Hungary was, at the time, the struggling eastern half of the 'bi-cephalous' Austro-Hungarian Empire, ruling over a territory in which Hungarians were not the majority, and Romania had just taken shape as a national state with the

unification of the two provinces of Moldavia and Valachia. Transylvania has since been, for both nations, the threatened remote borderland, where national subjects came into culturally and biologically dangerous contact with a specific other. László Kürti (2001) astutely points out how most of the twentieth century was spent, by intellectual elites in both countries (historians, folklorists, writers), constructing the threatened core of the nation precisely within these porous territories. Ardeal was simultaneously more Romanian than any other place and not Romanian enough, in the same way Érdely was very Hungarian and too tainted to be Hungarian enough.[7]

I suggest that imagining Transylvania for either of the nations—both as intellectual projects and modes of consciousness—was, and still is, also in dialogue with a geographic imagination that transcends their territorial boundaries. Transylvania exists as part of the overlapping imaginaries that outline 'Europe' and the 'Orient,' Central Europe/Mitteleuropa and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Christianity, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire, development, communism, and the list could continue.

Larry Wolff traces the process of inventing Eastern Europe and placing it on the map of the Western imagination back to the project of the Enlightenment—he calls it "an intellectual project of demi-Orientalization" (Wolff, 1994, p. 7). An economic periphery—at best—to the core of Western Europe (Wallerstein, 1974), Eastern Europe seems to have had an ambiguous position, inside Europe, but not fully, "a paradox of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, . . . an intermediary cultural space" (Wolff, 1994, p. 7) vis-à-vis Christianity, development, civilization. Geographically in-between the civilized Europe and the mystical, dangerous, and backward Orient (Said, 1979), Eastern

[7] The 1980s show an interesting intensification of this phenomenon, with Romanian and Hungarian historiographies batting over who lived in the are during the last centuries of the first millennium, and with the movement of tánc-ház (folkloric dance clubs in Transylvania visited by Hungarians from Hungary) (Kürti, 2001; Verdery, 1991).

Europe seemed like an intermediary space, similar enough to Europe to allow for projections of its expectations, and different enough to disappoint them. Wolff argues that Eastern Europe might be the first example of "underdevelopment"—with the spatial distance from the Western European core and the cultural difference/similarity interpreted as and converted into a developmental lag rather than absolute difference. This process continued into the iron curtain era and even after 1989, with some of the countries seemingly being stuck, just like Gloria Anzaldúa' (1987) borderland into a perpetual state of 'transition' (Burawoy & Verdery, 1999).

The caution would be that 'Eastern Europe' is quite a wide brush to use—the writings that Wolff was using describe anything from Silesia to the lands of the Tartars, from Russia to Turkey. Besides, "[a]s a long-term process, Eastern Europe is slowly fading away" (Todorova, 2004, p. 15). But, the ambiguity in the reference is mirrored in the ambiguity it engenders: Eastern Europe is, above all, a space with a graduated kind of ambiguity, a space of possibilities always structured (in the eyes of the civilized Occident) by the relationship a place has to its west. The West imagined itself—through various representations—as a civilizing project into this area, unfolding itself and seeping into its peripheries.

The visible bridge to the visible other (the Ottoman Empire) was the Balkan region, which has historically extended (ambiguously, of course) from Bosphorus to Hungary. In discussing the frozen image of the region, Maria Todorova builds on Wolff's argument, complicating it: she suggests that balkanism is not a mere subspecies of orientalism. "Unlike orientalism, which is a discourse about an imputed opposition, balkanism is a discourse about an imputed ambiguity" (Todorova, 1997, p. 17). Ambiguity, just like matter out of place, unsettles more than opposition. "This in-betweenness of the Balkans," she continues, "their transitionary character, could have

made [the Balkans] simply an incomplete other; instead they are constructed not as other but as incomplete self" (p. 18). In the Balkans, just like in the rest of Eastern Europe, the West can partially recognize itself: under threat, tainted, incomplete.

South Eastern Europe is another name that the Balkan region had taken on, mostly out of hope to shed the stigma attached to the historical name. Romanian governmental and non-governmental institutions, in particular, have been pushing for the label in the past few years, and several institutes and programs (many connected to policy issues) were funded in the region and in the UK.

The other newly established name is Central Europe (with the East Central Europe as a variation), which has emerged as a relevant category right before the end of the Cold War, as a way to carve out a space in between the in-betweenness of Eastern Europe and the more stable and desirable European Union/Europe (Todorova, 1997). Not exactly overlapping with the Mitteleuropa defined by righteous citizenship in the Germanic space (Prussia, Austro-Hungary), since it excludes Germany and Austria, this Central Europe encompasses some of the countries that accessed to the union in the first wave, in 2004, the easternmost one being Hungary. The same border happened to coincide with the eastern border of the Schengen Agreement, an agreement which regulates free travel within the member states, to the exclusion of their neighbors.

Of course, the above presentation of Eastern Europe's discursive construction might be read as too broad and as investing external representations with more power than they actually have. Still, I would argue that these ways of imagining the east of the continent as an incomplete and ambiguous self of the West have articulated—credibly and productively—with internal imaginations. Moreover, and especially in the twentieth century, ethnic and national categories have been constructed, sustained, and negotiated as part of the same process. Looking at these social and cultural spaces as just national,

'socialist' or 'post-socialist' misses the richness of their reality. I suggest that any analysis of these sites (even if they were analyses of 'change' or 'development') would greatly benefit from a historically informed dialogue with the ways in which they have been constructed—discursively and materially—in relationship to their 'outside,' and in particular their west. Steps have already been taken: several ethnographies have afforded great importance to consumerist and capitalist yearnings attached, in their post-socialist incarnations, to a Western core. Of these ethnographies, my two favorite are Daphne Berdahl's study of a village at the border between Eastern and Western Germany during reunification (1999), and Elizabeth Dunn's study of privatization in Poland (2004).

How should I think of Transylvania, then? Always east or part of Hungary and west or part of Romania, more European, but in the same time more balkanic, partly Orthodox, partly Catholic, partly Reformed, with a visible Western-connected built heritage, with mixed and confusing linguistic and biological legacies. How should I think, then, of the intersecting ethnic and national imaginations, the competing and complementing desires and yearnings, how should I connect these historical traces to current flows of money, and people, and ideas, to the ways in which people (local and not only) imagine the future?

Seeing from Transylvania

I have grown up and lived a good part of my short life looking at the world from Transylvania, wondering where I fit. I have always looked west, yearningly, hoping that things will get better, at some point in the future. As I was growing up, I waited for packages from people who "fled to the outside," I hoped my building would eventually get one of the illegal satellite dishes mushrooming in my town, and I dreamed of being able to emigrate with my family, knowing very well that I had none of the required ethnic

capital that would have allowed me to do so. Whenever we play-fought in the neighborhood, I knew where my allegiance stood—with the other Romanians—but, every time I would visit south of the mountains, I took pride in being different, "nicer," slightly foreign, and speaking a smidgen of Hungarian. I was called a "dirty Romanian" and I called them back "Huns," I wholeheartedly sang patriotic songs about how this land was Romanian, and I cried when a Hungarian friend told me that this is her home, too, so all she wants is for us to let her feel at home. I avoided wearing green for fear of being accused—by my Romanian friends—of siding with the Hungarians (by pointing to their flag), swore ritualistically that I would never marry a Hungarian (although I had crushes on many), and I coveted candy, magazines, and clothes brought in from Hungary and from places further west.

Remembering the past, understanding the present, and imagining the future have been for many of us, even under the socialist regime, a way to engage with the larger world, often outside the logic of support or resistance to the state and its totalitarian order. This was not as hard as it might seem. In particular for Transylvania, the ambiguities and possibilities that the imaginaries outlined earlier relied on for their articulation were precisely what allowed us to understand, live with, and navigate through the different projects that we were part of, and reconcile them—tactically—with our lived experience. These ambiguities structured our relationships to the 'outside,' to the past and to the future, as one of *desire*, constantly perceiving and denying a lack, constantly moving our eyes, hearts, and stomachs between the glamorous and distant West (seeping in our lives through objects, ethnic connections) and the proud, but socialist, Romanian nation. Ethnicity—however we might define it—was, for many, a way to translate and structure the reality of difference: not just linguistic difference, but also one of access to possibility.

This is one of the reasons why I chose Transylvania as a frame of reference, and not the rest of the ethnically homogenous Romania. In this, I follow Todorova's call for anchoring my analysis in the region's historical legacy as a way to attend to both the features of spatiality and to the vector of time in my analysis (2006).

UNDERSTANDING ETHNICITY IN TRANSYLVANIA

In my discussion of ethnicity, I follow and elaborate on approaches that treat ethnicity as a product of specific historical forces (capitalism in particular), and also as a force that structures experiences, practices, and understandings of the world.

John L. Comaroff (1987) provides me with a useful framework for achieving that. Rather than treating ethnicity/ethnic identity/ethnic identification as an intrinsic quality or a classification emerging solely out of groups' interactions with each other, he suggests a dialectical approach that takes ethnicity as, first of all, a relation between people, and a relation that becomes inscribed in culture and has the force to further structure the economic and social reality. He sees ethnicity as connected to the social division of labor and to the "stereotypic assignment" (p. 304) of different groups to particular, hierarchically arranged labor niches. Ethnicity has its origin in and works through, he argues, relations of inequality that form the political economy of a society and manifest themselves through unequal access to and control over means of production and the fruits of one's labor. While he is careful to point out that ethnicity as he describes it can exists outside the project of colonialism, capitalism, and the mercantile expansion of the European West, he still insists on capitalism as a useful explanatory framework.

His argument resonates with Eric Wolf's (1982) conclusion that the capitalist mode of production relies on and creates heterogeneity in the labor force, which in the

process becomes hierarchically ordered. Moreover, this process itself relies on and works through the production and reproduction of "cultural" differences and distinctions, so far as the social order comes to be seen as natural and acceptable. He adds a caveat, as well, that "[c]apitalism did not create all the distinctions of ethnicity and race that function to set off categories of workers from one another. It is, nevertheless, the process of labor mobilization under capitalism that imparts to these distinctions their effective values." (p. 380) Ethnicities, therefore, should be seen as "historical products of labor market segmentation under the capitalist mode" (p. 381).

Comaroff further draws attention to the necessary distinction between ethnicity as social structuring and ethnicity as a way of experiencing the world. In any analysis, the two should be constantly kept in tension and allow to inform each other: predicaments that subordinate ethnic groups might find themselves in, he argues, might be experienced as the sole result of ethnic identification, rendering historical conditions and current forces invisible. Part of my project, therefore, is to make visible some of those forces.

I use Comaroff and Wolf to orient my understanding of how ethnicity has historically worked in Transylvania, and in particular in the recent past. In that vein, I see ethnicity as connected to the restructuring of the area's economy starting with the eighteenth century (Verdery, 1983), under the larger influence of an emerging global capitalism, through an ordering of labor, and in particular through an ordering of access and control to various means of production. It is almost easier to think of the Romanian, Romany, Hungarian (including Szekely), and German groups as classes, in that sense, which is how they have primarily worked as until the nineteenth century. Cultural difference and ethnicity as a mode of consciousness became powerful ways of understanding social stratification in the area only with the emergence of national projects in both Romania and Austro-Hungary/Hungary.

I try not to take either Comaroff or Wolf too literally and expect a perfect translation of their suggestions into the historical reality of my region. Therefore, I attempt to incorporate into my analysis an attention to other forms of capital—symbolic capital, mobility, safety, and access to goods—as they become relevant in the second half of the twentieth century and beyond. My hope is to attend to the various (new) ways in which labor and capital mattered under the socialist regime, and in the same time, to the ways in which capitalism (as a historical project, global reality, material and discoursive point of reference) was still relevant in socialist and post-socialist Romania.

Also, to follow Comaroff, I do not equate the historical conditions that initially produced ethnic stratification in Transylvania with the historical conditions that allowed it to continue or transformed it, all the way into the present. My intention is to maintain a historical sensibility while keeping constant my object of analysis: the relationship between capitalism and ethnicity.

Ethnicity and the national project

So far, some of the most influential works on ethnicity in Transylvania have taken the route of ethnicity and national identity (Romanian and Hungarian) as projects of the intellectual class. Ethnicity has been mainly treated as a constant coordinate that neatly aligns populations and political interests in the Transylvanian contested territory, through Western-indigenous contrast, nationalism, ethnic claims and conflicts, and lately the added, EU-imported, multiculturalism. As Iordachi and Trencsényi (2003) show, though, this arrangement of Romanian historiography has been heavily influenced by global trends in writing and interpreting history, and is rapidly changing.

Katherine Verdery (1991; , 1996) argued that, in the case of Romanian national identity, intellectuals have had access to a privileged site of producing and transmitting

discourses that in turn were responsible for forming lasting subjectivities. She traces Romanian nationalism and ways of imagining the national self and the ethnic/national others through a genealogy of writings concerned with history, especially the history of the Transylvanian space. Historiography and retroactive interpretations of other historical writings emerged, in particular in the last two decades of the socialist years, as a way to strongly locate national essence in an indigeneity that transcended centuries of foreign *conquest* and *occupation*. Official political orientation (trying to escape from under the Soviet rule) and an eerie market mentality among intellectuals (vying over scarce resources and access to the apparatus of power) converged in the field of cultural production and the choice to make the Nation, rather then the working class, the way to further the socialist project and, eventually, world progress. The hegemony of national identity lived through the official discourse: media, education, the colonization of public spaces and 'official time.'

The turn toward the nation was attempted, also, through good old biopolitics, especially controlling (female) bodies, enforcing normative (reproductive) heterosexuality, and regulating reproduction (Kligman, 1998). With an economy that relied on an increased and extensive use of labor, socialist Romania resorted to encouraging higher birth rates by outlawing abortion and constantly surveying women's 'reproductive health' to the point of compulsory gynecological exams with results reported higher up the bureaucratic ladder. People were encouraged to revere women as mothers and mothers were encouraged to think of themselves as responsible for reproducing the nation. Making abortion legal again—right after the 1989 regime change—almost threw Romania into a nationalist crisis, women becoming, within a few years, internal enemies: the Romanian nation was 'dying,' due to low birth rates, high emigration, and the 'uncontrolled' reproduction of the Romani minority (Gal & Kligman,

2000). The late 1990s, as far as I remember, were filled with Romanian rumors of Hungarians being "taught" through churches and political and civic organizations to "multiply" and demographically take over Transylvania.

The reproductive politics of the socialist state were not directed at any national/ethnic group in particular, although they were part of the project of creating the new Romanian nation. For members of the Hungarian minority, however, these and other policies of the Romanian socialist state were experienced as nationalist moves directed at pressuring Hungarians in particular (Kürti, 2001). Forced industrialization, paralleled by massive rural to urban migration, were seen as ways of tipping the demographic balance in historically Hungarian towns (such as Cluj, Tg. Mureş, Oradea) and, with that, erasing their Hungarian history.

In the years following the regime change in 1989, and on a background of increased pressures from the European Union and other international organizations, the ethnic minorities in Romania started organizing politically. The only one that had any power at national level was the Hungarian minority, through their main party (the Democratic Union of the Hungarians from Romania). Their approach to politics was both militant in the area of cultural autonomy, and fully participating in nation-wide political coalitions, tipping the balance of power in exchange for more political concessions (all of which were irritating to the Romanian majority). The German minority seemed, on the other hand, the "model" minority, never explicitly making requests (often since there was no need to) and working through cultural organizations that represented the German state, alongside their own political organization, the Democratic Forum of the Germans from Romania.

Everyday ethnicity

From the above mentioned writings, we learn little about how these public ways of structuring social reality were translated into/connected to everyday experiences. The quite impressive project undertaken by Rogers Brubaker and his collaborators—four researchers working over nine years—had, at the core of its intention, understanding how ethnicity is constructed, lived, and negotiated in everyday contexts in the Transylvanian town of Cluj (Brubaker, Feischmidt, Fox, & Grancea, 2006). They purposefully move from 'nationalism' and 'national politics' into the realm of understandings of ethnicity vis-à-vis a more relevant frame of reference, a particular site within the region of Transylvania. For them, "[e]thnicity is a perspective on the world, not a thing in the world . . . a discursive resource . . . [that] . . . operates in and through countless acts of categorization . . . among many interpretive frames and discursive resources" (2006, p. 169). They draw attention to the marking power of ethnicity and to the interactional situations when people (Hungarians in particular) experience the world as ethnically marked social actors. Romanians, they suggest, are often blissfully unaware of their 'ethnicity,' unless they are faced the difference in a situation that places them at a sensitive bottom.

What I found refreshing in these researchers' approach is their insistence on approaching ethnicity through its intersections with other ways of categorizing people, ideas, and places. In particular situations—albeit structured by social models of experiencing the world—ethnicity articulates not only with the related categories of citizenship, religion, residence, language, but also to class, occupation, sense of mobility, age, and consumption.

Ethnicity and class

This opens the way to thinking about the relationship between ethnicity and class in Transylvania, ethnicity and cultural and economic capital, and connecting them to lasting legacies of historical arrangements of access to means of production, economic resources, and official and exclusionary divisions of labor. Katherine Verdery has already opened the door to a closer attention to these issues, in an ethnography that traced the fate of the Romanian and German peasantry in a South Transylvanian village (1983). Ethnic 'relations' seemed to be entangled with a history of land distribution, labor rights and obligations, and an agrarian reform (in the first part of the twentieth century) interpreted by Hungarians as an ethnic reform rather than an economic one.

While Romanians in Transylvania have historically experienced their position as one of both economic and political exclusion, for Germans, the past few hundreds of years have meant a trajectory of divergent developments: their political power has constantly been corroded, but their economic power has consolidated around production and trade privileges (tied to certain towns and territories) and control over the early industrial development of the region. Despite the profound changes of the last century, these are legacies that collective memories still attach themselves to. Moreover, there are material legacies, as well, in names, buildings, and—as this dissertation will show—(moral and legal) ownership rights.

If we are to understand class as connected to arrangements of access to and control over cultural and economic capital, I would argue that in Transylvania, there are clear and lasting continuities and overlaps between how people have been thinking of ethnicity and how they have been thinking of class (or at least social status)[8].

8 A similar situation is described by Deborah Cahalen Schneider (2006) in the case of a small Gorál community in Poland, where pre-war elites are using ethnicity (as mediated by discourses of tradition and modernity) to negotiate access to power and authority. These elites are trying to transform their renewed economic and cultural capital (some of it gained through the restitution of confiscated

Romanianness as historical inadequacy

While unmarked in the everyday (as suggested by Brubaker, Feischmidt, Fox, & Grancea, 2006), Romanianness is still, I would argue, experienced as a *particular* relationship to the world, riddled with senses of inadequacy and diverging superiority.

Quoting Matei Călinescu, Maria Todorova observes that for someone at the margins, asking the question of *How can one be what one is?* can "evoke feelings of envy, insecurity, inferiority, 'frustration or distress at the marginality or belatedness of his culture.' It can also trigger a mood of self-abuse; finally it could provoke resentment that could, in some cases, be transmuted, by way of compensation, into a superiority complex" (Todorova, 1997, p. 57).

Sorin Mitu echoes her observation in his detailed study on the historical formation of national subjectivity in Transylvanian Romanians (Mitu, 2001). He examines the process—again—through the work of intellectual elites and their writings during the Transylvanian Romanian Enlightenment and Romantic eras, honing in on the diverging and contradictory stereotypes instrumentally employed by them "to distinguish themselves from others or to deny a denigrating image coming from outside, to build self-confidence and to stimulate national activism, to delude themselves and avoid responsibility when faced with an unpleasant situation, to legitimize a certain political action or behavior" (2001, p. 9). The stereotypes that he discusses resurface, familiarly, in contemporary everyday speech: Romanians are dirty, and lazy, and dishonest; Romanians are brave, hard-working, and trustworthy.

---

property and some connected to being more Gorál than the rest of the village) into recognizable class differences and justifications for the status of political elite.

While I resist drawing simple lines between the cultural processes Mitu is pointing to and current realities, I suggest that, for Romanians in Transylvania, contemporary feelings of (historical) inadequacy are multiply determined by complicated cultural genealogies and material and social legacies, by sensibilities and ways of seeing the world from particular, geographically and historically informed positions.

ETHNICITY, CAPITALISM, AND DESIRE

In looking at current economic, social, and cultural transformations in Transylvania—and in particular in Sighişoara—I propose an approach that will attend to ethnicity not just as a kind of imagined primordial tie (Geertz, 1963) resting on a unity of language and common traditions, as a boundary making technique (Barth, 1969), or as part of rational, cost-benefit choices between forms of identification (Hechter, 1986). The move that I am making, through this dissertation, is to better understand how ethnicity in Romania—as a way of seeing and relating to the world—is embedded in and works through the capitalism's historical expansion in this region.

To this end, I suggest that focusing on the linear trajectory of pre-WWII capitalism through socialism through 'transition' towards an enigmatic capitalism might obscure the ways in which life in Romania has stayed in dialogue with, and not isolated from) the capitalist world. Granted, this dialogue was spotty, thin, and irregularly distributed in terms of geography, but existed despite the profound transformations in the economy, the state, and the public life.

Capitalist continuities

The fifty years of socialist economy and living have certainly left their dent in Romania as they have in the other countries of the so-called 'socialist bloc' (Burawoy & Verdery, 1999; Verdery, 1996). But, there were also limited continuities with the pre-1947 economic and social organization of the country, as the basis for the early intensive industrialization was precisely the capitalist infrastructure left from before the war. For example, Lampland (1995), in her study of the history of agrarian labor in a village in Hungary, shows how understandings of labor, money, and privatization show continuities that span from WWI to contemporary times. She also shows how these understandings actually prepared the villagers for a smoother transition to participation in a market economy than one would have expected.

To move to a tourism development context, Kristen Ghodsee's study of tourism in post-socialist Bulgaria showed how the existence of a socialist tourism sector catering to Western clients actually prepared both the infrastructure and the people involved in the service to 'transition' to a market-based economy (Ghodsee, 2005). Women, since they were the ones who carried most of the service employment weight, were in excellent position to function in the new economy, because of the skills and knowledge they had accumulated.

In Sighişoara, for example, all large factories and workshops had been developed out of older—mostly German owned—factories that had been nationalized after 1947. Using property restitution and compensations, some post-socialist reforms have attempted to restore this pre-war urban order through hopes fueled by the still-living memory of the inter-war prosperity[9] and the re-emergence of a bourgeois subjectivity.

[9] Especially for the older generations, there has been a nostalgic engagement with modernization, via a more prosperous past; for them, and for those that fell victim to their reminiscing stories, the socialist

I would like, though, to draw your attention to the living, proliferating, self-sustaining kinds of continuities between what might have seemed the remote world of global capitalism and socialism's reality, outside the opposition that both declared to each other. The social, cultural, and affective infrastructure that has remained in place, albeit transformed, has produced connections and continuities over what people might have experienced as insurmountable gaps and distances. People did travel, people did talk, people did receive letters and packages, they smuggled in books and magazines, they saw other people do it. And, there was a limited amount of audio-visual media produced in the Western Europe and North America that was imported and approved for viewing by the state (even if sometimes with the hope that this would educate people of the sins and shortcomings of capitalism). Denise Roman (2003) points out how "Dallas," the TV series, instead of serving the ideological purpose for which it was introduced—to put an easy-to-hate face on American capitalism—encouraged the wishful imagination of millions of Romanians, so much so that many still used it as a point of reference even fifteen years after it was pulled off the air. There were also continuities through an allegiance to the idea of a world civilization, to a classical humanity, and to certain "universal" cultural heroes and values.

These continuities would occasionally erupt through the fabric of everyday life in the experience of lack and lag, of being the incomplete and unsuccessful self interpellated by the "West": not having what people in the West had, not being what they were, not heading towards whatever they were headed to. At the same time, in the case that I am working with, ethnicity would also be experienced and used as a way to think through inclusions and exclusions, proximity and distance, opportunities and closures vis-à-vis a center always located to the west, in terms of both collective memory and material

reality was a regression, a fall into backwardness (also see Ferguson, 1999 for a beautiful ethnography about how the decline of modernity was experienced in the Zambian copperbelt).

legacy. As I have already suggested, the ethnic hierarchies in Transylvania were connected not only to references to past hierarchies, but also to how these hierarchies played out during the socialist era, in terms of localized social and cultural capital, trans-border mobility, or at least the symbolic potential for them.

Through living at the margins of Europe, being excluded not as an other, but as an incomplete self, Romanianness has become constructed as a relationship to other more or less complete selves of a Western Europe, to other more or less privileged participants (potential or actual) in the dream of global capitalism. Romanianness—stuck in the Balkan spot, tied to the unwanted socialist order and to a history of struggles to emerge out of the darkness of anonymity. Hungarianness, and especially Germanness—connected, mobile, European. Although the experience of living under socialism has been, to some degree, the same for everyone, differences that arose out of someone's relationship to the desirable western referent became articulated with other visible differences: language, name, residence.

Desire

As I have already hinted, one useful way to theorize these relations is by thinking them through *desire*. I see desire as both social and unconscious, as both productive and produced through the very investment in the social formation that creates the experience of lack and lag (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983). Desire, as indirectly suggested by Foucault, is a site through which people make themselves subjects to particular regimes of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1985). I believe desire can be seen also as a strategy to understand and navigate through contradictory regimes of power, and craft productive spaces for their articulation.

Returning to Romanians in Transylvania: some people saw a "revolutionary" potential in people's desire for something outside the socialist order; I interpret it, though, as the very mechanism that constructed what it was to be a socialist subject, and later as a way to assent to a higher power. By tracing the genealogies of those desires—the incomplete inclusion in the projects of modernity along the past few centuries—I can see the global system of power that people glimpsed at and imagined themselves in through the cracks of the closed national borders. In the context of global capitalism, it almost doesn't make a difference that people are immersed in one regime or the other—in some diffuse and overwhelming manner, the power of global capitalism shapes them all. Although I do not share Deleuze and Guattari's view of desire as a humanity's essential that offers a potential for liberation, I find myself attracted to their proposition that desire is productive, multiple, and mobile. This allows me to see desire as a force, and to take interests, intentions, and specific actions seriously, and at the same time see them as part of larger social formations that produce the experience of lags, differences, and lacks and that further shape desires (D. W. Smith, 2007). Methodologically, what attracts me most is the ability to treat these gaps not as empty, but as precisely the site of cultural and social (re)production.

In other words, in looking at Sighişoara and its surroundings, I am paying attention not only to continuities between the different ethnic/national orders and capitalism's expansion, but also to the gaps that they all rely on for their existence and perpetuation. The frenzy of transformations after the 1989 'revolution,' the multiple ways in which Western Europe, development, and capitalism was made visible and real, the fears and the hopes that animated the national political life can all be analyzed through the bubbling of these gaps and the push-pull of desires. I am proposing, then, an

analysis of the post-socialist transformations in Transylvania that goes beyond conflictual Romanian-Hungarian ethnic politics and extends outside the socialist economic machine.

As I will show in this dissertation, this piece of Transylvania is not only Romanian/Hungarian—as Transylvania is often seen from afar or in the context of national politics—but also German/Saxon, and Romani, and foreign. Ethnic orders connected solely to the Romanian or the Hungarian nationalist projects, at different moments in history, are in this place more openly insufficient and misleading axes for explaining away political subjectivities, social hierarchies, and economic agency. Ethnic orders don't stop at the edges of those nationalist projects, either—they seep, dynamic and situational as they are, into politics and the economy, into everyday life, and into places as far away as the UK or Germany, as aspirations, promised privileges, or nostalgias. Ethnicity, in this sense, becomes the faint promise of a space detached from descent, real bodies, and clear histories; it becomes the space where differently centered desires, developmental imaginaries, and economic agency can articulate with very material results. This dissertation is, then, in a way, an argument for cultural analysis. Instead of neatly aligning the local political economy with ethnically based access and privileges, I will approach ethnicity as a prolific, generative space that unsettles the constancy of any such assumed connections and provides the symbolic material and the motivation for producing and narrowing conditions of possibility. I see desire as the force that fills these spaces of possibility, warps and consolidates them. In that sense, developmental discourses and practices seem a privileged site for these processes.

Development and desire

The modernist dream of development—through urbanization, industrialization, and human 'emancipation'—was not foreign to the socialist project. On the contrary, it

was at the core of its logic and its expression. Despite the recognition of the power relations inherent in the world economy as a whole and despite the attempts to eschew participation in it on subaltern terms (through economic unions with 'developing countries,' a focus on self-sufficiency and no reliance on loans and budgetary deficits), Romania still assented to a vision of the future—as developed and progressive—that could be seen as converging with visions emerging out of the rest of the world.

The fury in Romania's post-1989 trajectory of development, its surprising assent to the brutal interventions of Western models and institutions (including the IMF, World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and, more recently, the various institutions of the EU) have, thus, roots not only in the perceived and (re)constructed gap of underdevelopment (see Escobar, 1984, , 1995), but also in a continuity of investment in the idea of development and particular kinds of progress that are tied to numbers and economic aggregates and indicators. Resistance exists, even if just through street-level discourse about the subordinate place Romania's government is agreeing to, but at the same time, there is a sense that the current period is ripe with particular kinds of coveted business opportunities that will disappear once Romania is set on its developed course.

DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

My dissertation, then, is about the material force of desire, about post-socialist 'development' as a generative and sometimes incomplete recycling of West-East/first world-second world/capitalist-communist hierarchies, and about ethnicity as a complex affective and material relationship to the various projects of (late) modernity.

In the first chapter, I look at a failed development project—a Dracula theme park—as a way to understand the different developmental imaginaries that are produced

and accessed in this space, their relationship to a material reality, as well as their limits of possibility. A seemingly benign interest in heritage preservation allowed various actors not only to claim a stake in the local development of the area, but also to police, order, and control developmental discourses, practices, and moneys.

The second chapter examines gentrification in the historical citadel of Sighişoara as a process connected, on the one hand, to the renegotiation and reformulation of a German identity of the place, and, on the other, to more general processes of redefining private property and property relations in post-socialist Romania. Historical German privilege, until now visible mostly at the level of desire and publicly articulated through 'heritage,' becomes material again through the restitution of confiscated property to its former German owners and their descendents.

In the third chapter, I argue that transformations of the public spaces in the citadel enable and mediate capitalist expansion and a gendered and classed disciplining of labor, leisure, and public ways of being. Through a symbolic struggle to destabilize heritage from its political and historical obligations, public space is rationalized, assessed, transformed into a resource to be accessed and controlled by the Romanian political majority.

The last chapter builds on the first three, trying to connect developmental imaginaries, localized microeconomics (in the sense of how people conceive of business, business possibilities), and material transformations in the Sighişoara citadel, by closely following practices that articulate local businesses, NGOs, and external heritage preservation funding. Neo-liberal requests for the financial sustainability of local NGOs result in novel practices and solutions that detour the initial developmental intentions of the funders and recycle heritage preservation funds into the local economy.

Chapter 1: Dracula Park

I have the deepest respect for Mrs. Schuster. She was the kind of local character that puzzles and demands admiration. A housewife in her mid 70s, smart, socially active, and reading German philosophy, in German, for fun. Every time I went to pay the rent, we talked about all sorts of interesting things—she would be the anthropologist, asking questions, then telling the stories herself, and theorizing aloud. I would lazily agree to being questioned about what *I* thought about the issues that *I* was interested in, knowing that Mrs. Schuster would eventually sum it up for me, as she saw it. She told me this particular story twice. One of her sons, very opinionated, smart, and now living in Germany, was against the Dracula Park project. He thought it would have been a disaster for the town. Mrs. Schuster thought of it the same—except that she thought that it should have been built. She remembers the fights she had with him on this topic, not because she wanted the project to happen, but because she just didn't think this was the way for decisions to be made. How could a minority (less than 5% of the town's population) that was opposing the project impose its vision on the rest of the town? "I thought we left this behind," she said, "in 1989. This is communism; where is the democracy, when a minority decides for the rest? If most people wanted the park, granted it was a stupid idea, why didn't they get it?" Mrs. Schuster, half Saxon and married to a Saxon, was slightly bitter about the arrogance of some who—just like her son—have left the country for a better life and insist on sporadically mingling in its affairs. She didn't think that any outsiders, either, should decide for the people of the town. "We all need to learn from our own mistakes," she said.

Just like Mrs. Schuster, I am curious about how a project with so much political and financial support at both the local and national levels was able to fade into a silent

failure in little over a year. My curiosity, though, questions this very support and seeks to understand it as well as the very possibility for the project to be imagined and the emotional force with which it was pursued and opposed.

THE PROJECT

In early 2001, the Romanian government quietly announced that it was looking for a location and partners to build a Dracula theme park. Like other projects of the Tourism Minister at the time, the park idea was received with a mix of measured distrust and hopeful curiosity. The palm trees planted by the seaside in Mamaia (in hope of selling the Romanian beaches as a tropical destination) kept dying every year, but, maybe, this project will work, who knows. I remember the first rumors and the people assessing the potential of the project by waiting for their neighbors and friends to decide on it first.

Five locations announced their interest, claiming rights via direct connections to Bram Stoker's character or to the Vlad Ţepeş/Vlad Dracul historical figures: Tihuța-Colibița (Bistrița), Târgovişte, Cetatea Poienari (Argeş), Sighişoara, and Bran. They were to be evaluated in terms of transportation access, architectural heritage, and the contribution of the local community. The decision was made as quietly as the announcement was, and some of the people I talked to claim to remember rumors that Sighişoara would be chosen as a location, long before the decision was announced—as early as the spring of 2001. One in particular—an informant who would later get involved in the controversy—remembers March 2001 discussions in the local council as if Sighişoara had already been chosen.

Indeed, on July 6th 2001, the Romanian government published an ordinance (Ordonanța de Guvern) "Regarding the adoption and implementation of the special

tourist development program for the Sighişoara area," which explicitly indicated Sighişoara as the winner of the bidding. The law and the project brought together six ministers, showing the weight and importance that the government at the time placed on the park: the Minister of Tourism, the Minister of Public Administration, the Minister of Public Works, Transport, and Housing, the Minister of Culture and Religious Affairs, the Minister of Development, and the Minister of European Integration.

Rumors (both contemporary and retrospective) explained Sighişoara's success through political connections between the Minister of Tourism (Dan Matei Agathon), one of his political allies (Miron Mitrea), and Sighişoara's mayor (Dorin Dăneşan). These connections, real or imagined, would play a major role in framing the project controversy on a national level and getting the national press involved in it. Other people suggested that the park was part of an older project, and it was connected to the future construction of a highway in the area. A couple of years before the Dracula Park was even announced as a project, local and well-connected investors bought tracts of land which they were hoping to later sell to the state at a profit.

Dracula Park was going to be built on a plateau called Breite, less than a mile (as the crow flies) from the citadel. Breite was presented as an empty, undeveloped space, a grassy area surrounded by a forest and partly populated by solitary oak trees. The plateau was used for grazing—mostly illegal—and as a weekend hangout for people from Sighişoara. Part of the plateau had been declared a protected area a few years back, but this was not public knowledge at the time. The land, owned by the City Council, had no infrastructure apart from a dirt road. However, as later rumors pointed out, Breite was surrounded by land that could be developed into much desired housing, provided that it had the infrastructure. Some of the people involved in the project were said to have bought land for this very purpose. The forest administration authority owned some part

of the hill (adjacent to the proposed site), and the county Environmental Protection Agency had some jurisdiction over the area, which required the builders to file for approval from the agency before starting building.

Illustration 5: The Breite plateau (in the back, to the left). The citadel hill is in the middle

Illustration 6: The Breite plateau: the area where the amusement park part of the theme park was going to be placed.

A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY

On July 6, the Romanian government issued the ordinance that created the needed administrative and legal structures for the launching of the Dracula Park project[10]. The ordinance was worded so that it framed the project as part of a larger tourism development project in Sighişoara and the surrounding area.

Less than a month after the project was announced, several articles authored by members of the local German Evangelical clergy appeared in the local Romanian press (*Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter,* abbreviated from now on as *JSR*) and the main German language paper in Romania (*ADZ für Rumänien*[11]). It was one of the few times I saw members of the local German community explicitly asserting their heritage rights over Sighişoara and connecting them with other kinds of political rights over the town and the region. Several other people published articles in the local newspaper (JSR): one local German artist and educator, protesting the park on terms that highlighted the danger it would pose over the built heritage in town, and a Romanian, who would later get involved in the local environmental rights movement. These and others would later form a rather unlikely coalition (very ethnically and religiously heterogeneous), officially registered as an NGO called *Sighişoara Durabilă*[12], which fought against the park locally and helped attract national and international attention. The spur of public protests, visible in *JSR*, was short lived and rather isolated. The newspaper was flooded by gratulatory and overly hopeful articles and official declarations that, as one informant put it,

[10] The original name of the ordinance: "ORDONANȚĂ nr.3 din 12 iulie 2001 privind aprobarea şi implementarea Programului special de dezvoltare turistică a zonei Sighişoara," published in *Monitorul Oficial nr. 405 din 20 iulie 2001*

[11] *Allgemeine Deutsche Zeitung für Rumänien*, http://www.adz.ro, is the only daily German language newspaper in Eastern and Central Europe, edited by the German political organization in Romania.

[12] Romanian for *Sustainable Sighişoara*

"promised that milk and honey would flow, and no Sighişorean would ever have to work again."

For the next couple of months, the protesting articles in the local newspaper became rarer and rarer. One informant involved in the protest explained it as a result of a search for new strategies: trying to raise public awareness through isolated and individual efforts didn't seem to be working, so they were more interested in reaching out to those already against the project and building a protest from there. Another informant explained the dwindling presence of protests in the local press (and their subsequent disappearance, deeper into the controversy) by pointing out business and political connections between, on the one hand, the owner of the newspaper, Başa, and the local council/the city hall on the other. Later in the fall, the city hall became the newspaper's largest advertiser (with ads for the project), and it was also public knowledge that the Başa's communication businesses (and the long lasting local monopoly of its TV and internet cable company) were somewhat dependent on the local council's benevolence. Echoing these censorship accusations, another informant laughed at my rather thick pile of news clippings with protests against the project: "they might look like a lot to you, but you can't tell the censorship from that—you can't see what never got published."

One of the journalists working for *JSR* at the time recounted how, although he was opposing the project, he slowly gave up trying to make his opinion known through the paper. Instead, he wrote articles that he would just hand to journalists working for national and international publications. He did all the investigative work and let the journalists verify the information, write it up in their own language, and take the credit.

> I didn't even bother, anyway, once the international newspapers started publishing materials about this, JSR didn't matter anymore, and this is what we did, trying to prevent important investors to come, with lots of money, so the project was hit in its main point, money, there was no money to build the project. Clearly… I worked here, I got all the information here, and it was taken further by the press,

> so when they went to trade fairs [to raise investing money], those people were already informed. So there was no use telling them beautiful stories with Dracula, jobs, and gains, they were already informed.

He added that, when he really wanted to make his opinion known, he would just write an article that had a double reading in it, visible once the readers knew who authored the article:

> So I couldn't write anymore, and everybody saw that I couldn't, but I would comment how I could. For example, I wrote a nice article about Saint Stephen, for his day, he was the first Christian martyr. And that's where I had the courage to comment on the Christian courage, you know… (laughs)… what Christian courage really means. So, the article was well received by both priests and laypeople, but I felt that they already knew I wasn't allowed to write about Dracula, so behind every sentence, there was this image, just like during the communism, behind every word, every poem, song, a second meaning was created… that's why someone would say this, because he is against this other thing, that's how it was, people read for a second… between the lines, and they understood.

On October 21, the annual meeting of the Schäßburg Saxons[13] took place in Sighişoara, at the German high school on the top of the hill. The meeting turned into a protest led by the German Evangelical church and was reflected with (real or feigned) surprise in the local press: "Considering the opportunities presented by the project's proponents (jobs, revitalizing the regional tourism, increasing the quality of life, restoring the historical citadel), the protest came as a shock, especially for the national media present at the meeting."[14] The national media present at the meeting didn't seem to take the protest all that seriously; the titles are, at best, ironic: "The Church rises against Dracula Land. The Evangelicals more Catholic than the Pope" (*Evenimentul Zilei*), "A blow in the chest for tourism: because they're afraid of the Satanists' invasion, hundreds of Sighişoreni protest against the building of Dracula Land" (*Naţional*).

---

[13] The meeting was organized by the Heimatortsgemeinschaft (HOG) Schäßburg (roughly translating into "hometown community,") the organization of the former Sighişoreni (mostly Saxon) who now live in Germany. HOG Schäßburg organizes similar meetings every year, some in Germany, some in Sighişoara.
[14] "Pro şi contra Dracula Land," by Ioan F. Pascu, in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter,* October 24-30 2001

Agathon sent a message for the Saxons, read to the restless crowd by Dăneşan, the mayor. The message started with a brief introduction of the project as something larger than just the park and the special attention afforded to the "German ethic and cultural element," which had been, Agathon insisted, the decisive reason for choosing the current position. About three quarters of the message took the rather risky route of addressing "some tendencies regarding the creations of suspicions around the project," a route still remembered by some of the local Germans that I talked to as an indirect threat addressed to them. The main source identified in the speech was Mihai Eminescu Trust, a London based foundation that has been interested and active in the area since the 1980s. Agathon responded briefly to all the issues raised by the project's opponents by pointing out how they are either untrue or unfounded, and closed the address with a menacing tone that reflected the changing attitude of the project proponents' towards the 'German element' from a taken-for-granted ally to a possible and dangerous threat:

> I am informing you about all these, because we know the fact that these pieces of information are pushed forth from dark hidden zones whose purpose is compromising the project's actions and undermining our participation on the investment market. I ask you not to fall into this trap, I ask you to help this project with all the means at your disposal.[15]

Another article published the same week in a regional newspaper[16] reproduced some of the letter word for word and focused on the enemies of the project, which, according to the authors of the article, have international connections and ambitions to turn the controversy into an international one, and which have now the attention of SIE (Serviciul de Informații Externe, which is the Romanian agency for collecting international intelligence). The SIE reference was immediately picked up by both

[15] All quotes from the letter, as presented in "Mesajul domnului Dan Matei Agthon, ministrul Turismului, adresat întâlnirii de la Sighişoara a etnicilor germani," *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*, October 24-30, 2001.
[16] "Investitorii români şi străini pot răsufla uşurați: Duşmanii lui Dracula Park, căutați de SIE," by Alin Bolbos and Daniel Sârbu, *Ziua de Ardeal*, October 24, 2001.

supporters and protesters and brought up again and again as proof of an international conspiracy and governmental oppression, respectively. Regardless of the fact that it was true or not, it is remembered as one of the dark *real* facts about that period in the history of the town, and it is a sign of the intensity and the sincere paranoia that were taking over the entire town. One of the main opponents of the park told me that he is convinced he was under phone and direct surveillance, and that people in his life (family, friends, co-workers) had been approached by strangers asking questions about him and his involvement in the protests. They could have been journalists, but, he insisted, they could have been SRI officers (Serviciul Român de Informații, the Romanian internal intelligence agency). This article was also one of the first ones in which those who opposed the project locally were directly accused and threatened. Following the language of the time (remember, this is October 2001), they called the local German clergy "Talibans" and accused them of trying to undermine the Romanian government.

Another man to whom I talked, who also opposed the project, told me that in preparation for this interview, he read over the journal that he kept during the events. He was surprised to remember that he only wrote down general facts—no names, no dates, nothing specific about who he talked to and about what:

> I didn't write in my journal because I was afraid to leave any traces, because I was seeing so many people, and I didn't know many of them, they could just make me into a public enemy, they could come, search my house, see what they can find... and they take me and say I am a spy, that I met with so and so, look, who he came with, so, I was meeting all kinds of people, but I didn't actually know what they were, I later found out about one that was a secret service officer.

Within a week or so, the mayor's and the project proponents' attitude changed dramatically to an aggressive anxiety fueled by the fear that the financing of the project would become uncertain. By then, it had been decided that the majority of the capital would be raised through the public sale of shares in a company established through a

public-private partnership, with the local council contributing mainly the land, the national government financing some of the basic infrastructure (22 billion lei for roads and 2 billion lei for water[17]), and other companies getting involved through direct investments and exclusive contracts. Dăneşan, the mayor, published a position paper in *JSR*[18], aggressively addressing the protesters, accusing them of "ill-will that makes (him) think of particular malevolent interests":

> I would ask the German ethnics [which have emigrated from Romania years ago] that come to Sighişoara every now and then for vacation and to make an inventory of what got broken and what still stands—what and how much have they done so that this town would not die? Coming from Germany and exchanging their Deutsch Marks into Romanian lei, of course they can have a wonderful vacation here… Of course they can afford to critique and offer their opinions on this and that without even trying to really know the problems. Then they leave and work in a capitalist society and live by the rules of that society… But what is the life of those that stayed and live their everyday life with Romanian money—and hope for a better life for their families? For those graduates that want to have a future in their own country, in their own profession, instead of having to do the work that Westerners wouldn't do because it is considered debasing?

He went on to accuse Alexandru Goța (who had been opposing the project on environmental grounds) of having done nothing for Breite before the project was announced, and to mock Hans Bruno Fröhlich (the head of the German Evangelical Church in Sighişoara) for fearing Satan's involvement in the project (when Fröhlich's arguments were wider than just religious concerns). Dăneşan pointed out that the high ranking Romanian Orthodox clergy that he had talked to reassured him of the Church's support of the project, since the faithful need not only "the spiritual food that the Church gives to them, but also material support and good living conditions so that they can raise their children with dignity."

---

[17] Andrei, Carmen. 2002. "Vocea societății civile, cea care plăteşte taxe şi impozite, este ignorată," in *România Liberă*, February 22, page 14

[18] "Poziția primarului Sighişoarei referitoare la unele păreri contra Programului de dezvoltare turistică a zonei Sighişoara," *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*, October 31 - November 6, 2001.

The Romanian Orthodox Church had actually been reluctant to officially endorse or condemn the project—both options looked too risky. Individual representatives of the Church, though, including the local head, offered their public support for the project, justifying it as supporting the right of the people for a better life. The local head ("Protopopul Dan") even blessed the project once it was officially launched in a ceremony in November 2001; some people suggested that he was a good friend of the mayor, and that they had known each other since they were very young.

Some of the most acerbic local opposition was born out of the disappointment with the Church's position and a profound feeling of betrayal. Granted, it was an intense period for everybody, supporters of the project and opponents of it, and their perhaps mild attitudes were quickly polarized and blown out of scale by the intensity of the events. For many, it seemed like they had reached a crucial, a defining moment of their existence, from which *the rest of their lives* would be decided, in very final and consequential ways. It was going to be long promised and desired prosperity, or it was going to be cruelly taken away, it was going to be the destruction and defacement of the town, or its dignified future. Talking about the religious dimension of the park controversy had the same tremor and intensity attached to it. For Mihai, a religious studies student, on his way to become an Orthodox priest, deciding what course to take—against or for—was connected to the very core of his faith. He opposed the project publicly and got involved with the Sighişoara Durabilă group, but felt hurt by his own church's reluctance to condemn the project.

> At one point, I was under such a pressure, already, I didn't feel encouraged by the encouragements of my own friends, they didn't help me anymore, you know? I was, somewhere, in my own world, under a constant pressure, and I refused to even talk to my mother about this […] I was too pressured and psychically consumed. At one point, JH suggested that all of us that were against should light a candle and place it in the window, it was right before Christmas, in 2001, November-December. And I lit it every day, and people knew, I put it in the

> window, right by the street, and whoever walked by, saw the candle in the window. […] It was a question of courage. […]
>
> One time, I had a very hard day. I had just written an article, and there was a lot of discussion, and many noticed and were upset, "are you saying that we are all stupid?" Some people were calling me up on the phone, and I didn't know anymore, I felt isolated, and I thought about it…I think I am against my own church. I need to stop before I become heretic. Because, if I am alone, and everybody else is against me, I think I have a problem… I am not supported, I can't see one sign that someone appreciates what I am doing […] Even my friends would say, "what about your future, they won't let you become a priest anymore, it's good that you have courage, but…" sometimes I could feel it in their voice. […] And, that day I was completely turned inside-out, and I said, I will pray to God to give me a sign, should I go on or should I not… (laughs nervously)…I have never done that before, to ask God for a sign, so I prayed for a half an hour, and I stayed home, and … the phone rang…

He stops, and hesitates. After a while, tears are flooding his cheeks. He asks me if we could take a break, and I turn the tape recorder off. After a few minutes of silence, he starts again and motions to me that I can turn the recorder back on. He apologizes and continues, telling me about a teacher in town that called him up to thank him for taking the stand he took, even though the priests in town supported the park.

> …I didn't even know what to say, and that's when I felt, something like a strength, yes, this is the sign I was waiting for, anything can happen now… if I have this one more person next to me, it's ok (laughs), somebody that would be honest. That's all I needed. And, after that, all my depression was gone.

He and two other people asked for an audience with the Patriarch of the Church and published articles in the main national religious publication, *Viaţa Cultelor*[19]. The patriarch didn't see them, but they did get an audience with one of his vicars. They used the opportunity to relay to him as much information as they could about the project. Towards the end of the controversy, the Romanian Orthodox Church, still reluctant to oppose the project, issued an official statement in which it condemned the choice of the

[19] "Un grup de sighişoreni s-a adresat P.F. Părinte Patriarh pentru stoparea proiectului Dracula Park," in *Viaţa Cultelor*, February 21, 2002, year X, no.447; "Conferinţa 'SOS Sighişoara' legată de proiectul 'Dracula Park'," in *Viaţa Cultelor*, year X, no.453.

name 'Dracula,' while supporting any "idea that would bring material wellbeing to this people."[20]

The end of October and the beginning of November turned out to be the moment when the controversy picked up steam and spread beyond the town's limits. This moment can partly be explained by the official launching of the project on November 5, 2001, only four months after the announcement that Sighişoara had been chosen as a location and with practically no time to do the necessary research and planning for a project of this scope. The launching also meant the official announcement of the public sale of shares in the project's company, which was to start in December. The sale was intended to raise 155 billion lei (approximately 5 million USD at the time) by February 15, 2002, but the deadline had to be changed twice due to low sales. By the final deadline, April 3, only 60% of the money had been raised, despite the heavy promotion by various government officials, including Adrian Năstase, the Prime-Minister at the time, who personally invested the equivalent of 4500 USD in order to show his confidence in the success of the project. I met very few local people who bought (or admitted to having bought) shares, and the reason seems to have been not the lack of confidence in the project, but rather the lack of money. Few thought they would benefit through direct profits since the amounts they could invest were so small, and rather, they expected the development project to boost the local economy and benefit them indirectly.

The national sale of the shares as well as the open involvement of several governmental officials in the project were used as proof that the project was, really, a political one, as the supporters seemed to all be part of or connected to the majority party at the time, Partidul Social Democrat (PSD). The first national voices—journalists and political figures based in Bucharest—criticized the project as PSD's attempt to extract

[20]Trifu, Dan. 2002. "B.O.R. se opune denumirii de Dracula Park şi legiferării prostituției," in *Cuvântul Liber*, March 19, page 3.

resources from the state (through financing the project directly or contributing with land and resources) and from the people (comparisons were made with pyramidal games[21] or a large investment scam, FNI[22]) in order to consolidate their pre-1989 inherited power. Indeed, a government's ordinance early in 2002 (Ordonanța Guvernamentală nr.16/2002) rewrote the contract rules for companies considered public-private partnerships: contracts no longer had to be transparent and awarded through public bidding; the law also opened the way for expropriations (only allowed for public interest projects) to eventually pass into private hands[23]. Regardless of the intentions and achievements of the ruling party at the time of this project, the Dracula Park controversy thus became initially framed, at the national level, as one between supporters and opponents of PSD. This offered fertile possibilities of intervention for social actors that otherwise could barely claim an interest in the project. The major papers in the country started running articles criticizing the project mainly through its PSD affiliations, but also accepted articles from local protesters who framed the project in terms of its impact on the environment or the built heritage. Some members or sympathizers of the opposition parties also made public declarations or authored articles in several large newspapers.

Liga Pro Europa[24], an NGO based in Târgu Mureş that worked in the field of ethnic rights but extended its activity to more general "civil society" issues, also got involved in the controversy in November by publishing a statement by Hermann Fabini in their official newsletter. They extended their involvement later by joining other NGOs

[21] The most famous of the games, since refer to through the post-socialist folklore, was Caritas (see Verdery, 1995).
[22] Petre Mihai Băcanu. 2002. "Să dea Dumezeu să ne fi înşelat noi, iar deponenții la jocul piramidal 'Dracula Park' să nu-şi piardă banii," in *România Liberă*, February 21, page 1.
[23] The connections between the Dracula Park project and the legislative change done in: Popa, Camelia. 2002. "Un paradis fiscal, cu investitori aleşi pe sprânceană," in *România Liberă*, February 21, page 14.
[24] Liga Pro Europa had been known for being connected, directly or through the issues they supported, with the main Hungarian party in Romania, Uniunea Democrată a Maghiarilor din România, and occasionally with the political right and center-right, in their anti-communist fight.

involved in the conflict, drafting and publishing official statements signed by various personalities, and organizing an 'SOS Sighişoara' meeting on March 21st, in Sighişoara. They were followed by Grupul pentru Dialog Social (GDS), an NGO regularly involved—mainly on the side of the right and center-right opposition—in actions that supported political freedom and the freedom of speech. GDS organized, on February 20, 2002, a mini-conference that brought together a diverse group of organizations fighting the project.

Once the project came to be discursively framed as a political dispute, its proponents immediately started to explain its opposition precisely in these terms, with the help of newspapers and journalists that were politically on their side or just interested in keeping the controversy alive. Those that were opposing the project, the proponents said, were part of a conspiracy led by the main opposition party, who was trying to move the project to the Braşov area, at Bran, in one of the locations considered initially. Rumors had it that members of the opposition—who were controlling the Braşov county—had bought land in the area where the park would had been built, and were hoping to use the park funds to develop the area in their own interest. The tension exploded when, in a televised debate about the park, two opposition (PNL) senators and one PNL Braşov representative presented the advantages of the Braşov location, and Marius Stoian (the representative of the Ministry of Tourism) threatened one of them by promising to reveal a file with information collected about him by SRI, the Romanian secret services. One of the senators, Hermann Fabini, originally from Sighişoara and an accomplished architect and architectural historian, was targeted repeatedly through direct declarations and innuendos in the press.[25]

[25] Toader, Mihai. 2001. "Ceartă PSD-PNL pe parcul de distracţii: Dracula scoate dosarele," in *Ziua*, November 19, page 3; Ivanciuc, Cornel. 2001. "De ce are baba coif sau de ce vor unii să-l tragă pe Dracula, pentru a doua oară, în ţeapă," in *Academia Caţavencu*, November 27 – December 3, page 3; Dan Matei

On November 13, the Romanian government also organized a press conference in London, meant to attract both direct investments and the attention of major tourist agencies. As reported by Jessica Douglas-Home, president of Mihai Eminescu Trust (involved in the area around Sighişoara), those that participated in the conference were not impressed: they indicated that what Romania needs in terms of tourism development is not a Disneyland in an out-of-the-way spot, but investments in the basic infrastructure[26]. Agathon was enthusiastic about the meeting and declared upon his return that three large companies were interested in the project, a fact later disproved by journalists writing for the *Bucharest Business Week* and quoted by Douglas-Home. The investors were not the only thing Agathon seemed to have lied about: he also suggested that UNESCO not only agreed with the project, but also congratulated the Romanian government on its initiative.

By February 2002, the controversy had attracted national and international attention. In February, March, and April, one of the main Romanian daily newspapers, *România Liberă*, ran an almost daily series about the project, publishing articles written by local protesters from Sighişoara, Romanian and foreign specialists in heritage protection, history, and environmental rights, and representatives of local, national, and international NGOs. Douglas-Home used her connections and influence in the UK and authored articles in several large English language publications, and also managed to attract the interest of Prince Charles—the honorary patron of the NGO she was leading—to get involved directly in the controversy. He declared his intention to visit Sighişoara, which he did, between May 3 and 6.

Agathon. 2001. "Gata cu vorbele. Vom lăsa buldozerele să vorbească," in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*, November 28 – December 4, page 4.

[26] Jessica Douglas-Home. 2001. "A new Dracula horror in Romania," in *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, December 28.

At the December meeting in Helsinki, UNESCO's World Heritage Commission expressed its interest in the situation, and at the recommendation of ICOMOS it suggested that the state consider other sites for the building of the park, promising to send representatives to examine the issue on the ground. The visit, on March 25, 2002, was one of the most memorable moments of the controversy for many involved in the event, especially the members of Sighişoara Durabilă, who staged a mini-demonstration in both the citadel and on Breite, where the park was to be built. The confrontation on Breite turned into a humorous little war, with the authorities making the hired guards attack a supposed journalist—who turned out to be an UNESCO official—and confiscate his camera. At the twenty-sixth meeting of the UNESCO World Heritage meeting in Budapest, in late June 2002, the Commission expressed its relief at the news that the project site was to be moved and urged the Romanian state to not place any amusement park in the vicinity of the World Heritage sites[27] in Transylvania[28].

Following UNESCO's visit and recommendations, Michel Rocard, the president of the Cultural Commission of the European Parliament, addressed a letter to all the Romanian officials involved in the project, requesting them to stop any work on the park until UNESCO's World Heritage Committee meeting in Budapest.

Both Mihai Eminescu Trust and Sighişoara Durabilă were somewhat responsible for extending the scope of the controversy beyond the edges of the town: MET through its many international and national connections and SD by providing a local point of reference that many outside protesters were able to reference as 'the local voice.'

---

[27] The World Heritage sites in Transylvania are: Villages with fortified churches (1993, 1999), the Dacian fortresses of the Orăştie Mountains (1999), the historic center of Sighişoara (1999), and the wooden churches of Maramureş (1999).

[28] See Report of the UNESCO-ICOMOS joint mission to Romania, 22-28 March 2002 (WHC-02/CONF.202/INF.11 Paris, 25 May 2002)

SD was a rather small organization born, in fall 2001, through the instrumental association of several people who were opposing the project for a diverse array of reasons. The local opposition was, actually, a minority, as my discussions with the locals and a government-sponsored survey showed. (According to the survey, nine out of ten people supported the project[29].) Initially, the SD members were not very well connected, except the German clergy, who had connections with the larger local and diasporic German community, as well as German NGOs and governmental organizations. Once the controversy took on a national scope, SD was able to leverage its 'local voice' position and access public forums and actors that would have otherwise been out of reach. Two of the SD members were able to participate in an early BBC report on the project, and many of them have contributed articles—rather redundant in content—to local and national publications. The name of the organization was included on most of the public statements against the project, and SD was present at both roundtable discussions/conferences organized by Liga Pro Europa and Grupul pentru Dialog Social.

By spring 2002, it was getting more and more obvious that the project actually had little chances of succeeding. The pompous and hopeful declarations of the various governmental officials involved in the project, all the promises and quite daring lies had began to worn off. The IPO did not bring the expected results—only 60% of the shares were sold. As expected, the short period of research and planning was seen as a reason for distrust, and, a couple of months into the project, the inexperienced manager (a former journalist) stepped down and was replaced. The project would have required an

[29] The survey, ordered by the Minister of Tourism and paid for by the project's company, Fondul de Dezvoltare Turistică Sighişoara, showed that in December 2001: 99% have heard about the project, 91% "were happy about the imminent neighboring park," 57% thought the park would bring more jobs, 18% more money, 11% thought would raise their quality of life, 16% that it could be a nuisance, 19% thought that the main beneficiary of the project would be the town. Source: Ioan F. Pascu. 2001. "Nouă sighişoreni din zece sunt pentru Dracula Park," in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*, December 27 2001 – January 2, 2002, page 6.

impressive set of authorizations and approvals from local, regional, and national governmental agencies, with extensive application processes and long waits. In February 2002, the project was already behind its deadlines: none of the twenty-two authorizations needed by that date had even been applied for[30]. The Mureş county Agency for Environmental Protection (Agenția pentru Protecția Mediului) kept putting off giving a definitive answer and finally refused its approval of the project on the grounds that Breite was a protected area. The minister's and the mayor's enthusiasm turned, around this time, into bitterness and occasional hysteria, making public statements about the international conspiracy that was preventing the project from taking place. UNESCO's worries about the danger to the built heritage in town were voiced in a final recommendation not to build the park near the Saxon churches region (100 km south and west of Sighişoara) and paralyzed all the remaining traces of desire for involvement in the project. By mid-summer 2002, no voices—not even local—were enthusiastic of the project anymore. In February 2003, Agathon declared that Romania, indeed, does not have the financial and intellectual resources to deal with such a large project, and therefore he had commissioned Pricewaterhouse Coopers to do another feasibility study. PwC's recommendations were, first of all, to move the project to a site that had better infrastructure and was more easily accessible. Snagov was chosen as the new site, without the project being ever implemented.

As I heard them over and over, the rumors about the real reason for the project's abandonment—at its Sighişoara site—were that Price Charles called the Romanian president, Ion Iliescu, on the phone and told him to put a stop to the project. The conversation apparently did take place[31], and nobody really knows what was said. All

[30] Carmen Andrei. 2002. "În cazul Dracula Park 'legea e doar pentru căței'—Ministrul Agathon vrea să obțină 22 de avize într-o singură săptămână," in *România Liberă,* February 22, page 1.
[31] 2002. "Prințul Moştenitor al Tronului Marii Britanii consideră că Dracula Parc poate distruge stilul tradițional al Sighişoarei," in *Viața Cultelor*, May 10, no.457.

the other reasons, in particular the new feasibility study, were presented to the public just so that the real reason wouldn't become known. So, many people jokingly agreed, the government was right—an international conspiracy did stop the project.

GERMANNESS, DEVELOPMENTAL IMAGINARIES, AND LOCAL REALITIES

In the July 8, 2001 press conference, Agathon justified Sighişoara's choice by invoking five sets of reasons that were organized, surprisingly, not around the town's fit with the Dracula theme, but around its historical and contemporary German connections, as well as the local community's (i.e. City Hall's) willingness to contribute to the project materially and through a lax and benevolent economic and political environment. The language and the content of his justification seemed to have anticipated future criticisms of the project, mainly that of misuse of the German heritage, and of poor planning and management (for which the Romanian government was notorious). Attempting to court the domestic and diasporic German community or anyone who would worry about it, in a language that echoed the jargon of various international financial institutions that have used Romania as a playground for the past ten years, Agathon expressed his concern for the fate of Sighişoara, as a World Heritage site and the only Germanic inhabited medieval citadel in Europe. "Without a sustained effort to rehabilitate and revitalize it," he said, "Sighişoara will be—according to UNESCO's experts—completely destroyed in the next fifty years," implying that the project would somehow help the preservation of the historical citadel. Invoking feasibility studies done by the "National Institute for Research and Development in Tourism" or commissioned by the Sighişoara City Hall (and completed by Balzer Continental Inc., from the US), as well as the willing contribution of the city in the form of financing more studies, offering the land, and

attracting investors, Agathon concluded that Sighişoara would be the most desirable and efficient solution due to its geographical position and economic potential.

What really made Sighişoara most desirable was, to quote Agathon, "the political potential of the "Germanic" space between Sighişoara, Mediaş, and Sibiu for developing projects by involving the German community and with the support of the German government, the government of the Bavarian Land, through direct and indirect investments, and with the explicit support of the Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania." Agathon also pointed out that "[t]he target market for the Dracula Land project is, first of all, German, and this is why its concept follows the German line." [32] The Germans are the majority of the tourists sent all over Europe by companies like Condor&Neckerman, ITS, and TUI. The park would be modeled after "Westernstadt Pullman City," a Western-themed amusement park in Germany, and the Romanian government was "very close" to signing a contract with the company operating it. Agathon also boasted that the prestigious German company Siemens would be in charge of developing the infrastructure for the park.

The German mentions were in part preemptive, if misguided, gestures of goodwill towards the local and diasporic German communities, signaling to them that they had been included in the project and that the project was designed with *them* in mind. But, what this German innuendo was mainly doing, I would argue, was sketching and accessing an imaginary—let's call it modern or developmental—where Romanian hopes for a Western future and a Western prosperity have been settling for decades. Agathon's rendering of the project—and it wasn't just his personal vision—was brushing against the German tips of this landscape of desire and hope: the German work ethic, seriousness, and success, German prosperity and its promise of sharing and spilling over into our

[32] All quotes are from Dan Matei Agathon's statements at the July 8, 2001 press conference, as presented in "S-a hotarât: Dracula Land pe Breite!," in *Jurnalul Sighisoara Reporter*, July 11-17, 2001, page 4.

needy pockets. The German referent was probably one of the most credible and well contoured of the many invoked by this imaginary, thanks to the lingering memory of all the émigrés and the streams of packages flowing back into the country before 1989. Germany had been a concrete, real sign of the West, a credible proof of its existence and success, but a sign nevertheless, and a sign of a remote reality, at that. Agathon made the mistake of trying to do more than just reference it; he tried to make it material, to promise its perfect replication through a hyperbolic project that would bring to Sighişoara—he declared—a million tourist a year, would eventually create 6000 local jobs, and would total 18 million euros worth of direct investments and 20 million euros in indirect investments. A project made for Germans and by Germans, after a German model, would not fail. This was what we all had been waiting for.

I called this *a* developmental imaginary when there were probably more, centered in different places and in different kinds of ethnic, classed, and geographic subjectivities. Some of the people to whom I talked, even though they supported and believed in the project, admitted to being unsettled by Agathon's foolish invoking of German references that to them seemed to match his inability to *see* from the same place as the locals. A southerner and a *bucureştean* (from Bucharest), he was prone to misunderstandings and insensitivity to the local situation, in the same way other *regăţeni* (from the 'Kingdom,' outside Transylvania) would attempt to inhabit local anti-Hungarian subjectivities. The same Romanians that told chauvinistic jokes and expressed negative feelings toward their Hungarian fellows would feel profoundly insulted when a *regăţean* complained about being spoken to in Hungarian by a store keeper or seeing too many Hungarian language public signs and inscriptions. Hungarian and German connections—chauvinism or desire—are, to some degree, seen as local rights.

When the project was officially launched on November 5, 2001, Agathon held a speech in which he addressed fears of southern colonization of the area. By now, the murmur on the street was already that rich *bucureşteni* were buying houses in the citadel and were going to transform it into a ghost town where they would comeback to spend several days a year. The myth of the rich and unsophisticated *bucureştean* surfaced every now and then while I was present there for fieldwork, especially when people had to explain cars crookedly parked in the citadel, rude customers, and women struggling to walk in high heels on the citadel's broken cobblestone streets. So Agathon felt it was important to melt some of these fears, which threatened to feed a local opposition to the project. "These jobs will not be taken by *bucureşteni*, and the *bucureşteni* will not buy the citadel, and the prices in Sighişoara will not explode. (…) the twelve million dollars a year … will not go to Bucharest." Referencing the will of the locals backing the project, he continued, "I don't want to impose this project on you by force, from my office in Bucharest."[33]

As soon as it was clear that the strongest opposition to the project came from the local and diasporic German community, the German dimension of the project faded and made room to a generic Western image of prosperity, along the same lines and with the same contours: the management/financial jargon of projects and projections, the promise of a Western prosperity that was gullible, obsessed with consumption, and ready to spill into a generic local pocket. This transition, paralleled by an increased local faith in the project, was also connected to the increased leadership role that the local mayor, Ioan Dorin Dăneşan, took in the project. His involvement—with its guarantees of vision from the inside—and his large, if inert, electoral base helped the local population take moral and emotional ownership over the project. Several months into the story, Dracula Park

[33] Dan Matei Agathon. 2001. "Gata cu vorbele. Vom lăsa buldozerele să vorbească!" in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*, November 28 – December 4, page 4.

would turn into Dăneşan's personal crusade. The friends and enemies made along the way still structure the local political arena, and Dăneşan still decries nostalgically the opportunities lost with the death of the project, pointing occasional fingers at local NGOs, Prince Charles, and an undefined international conspiracy.

THE PARK

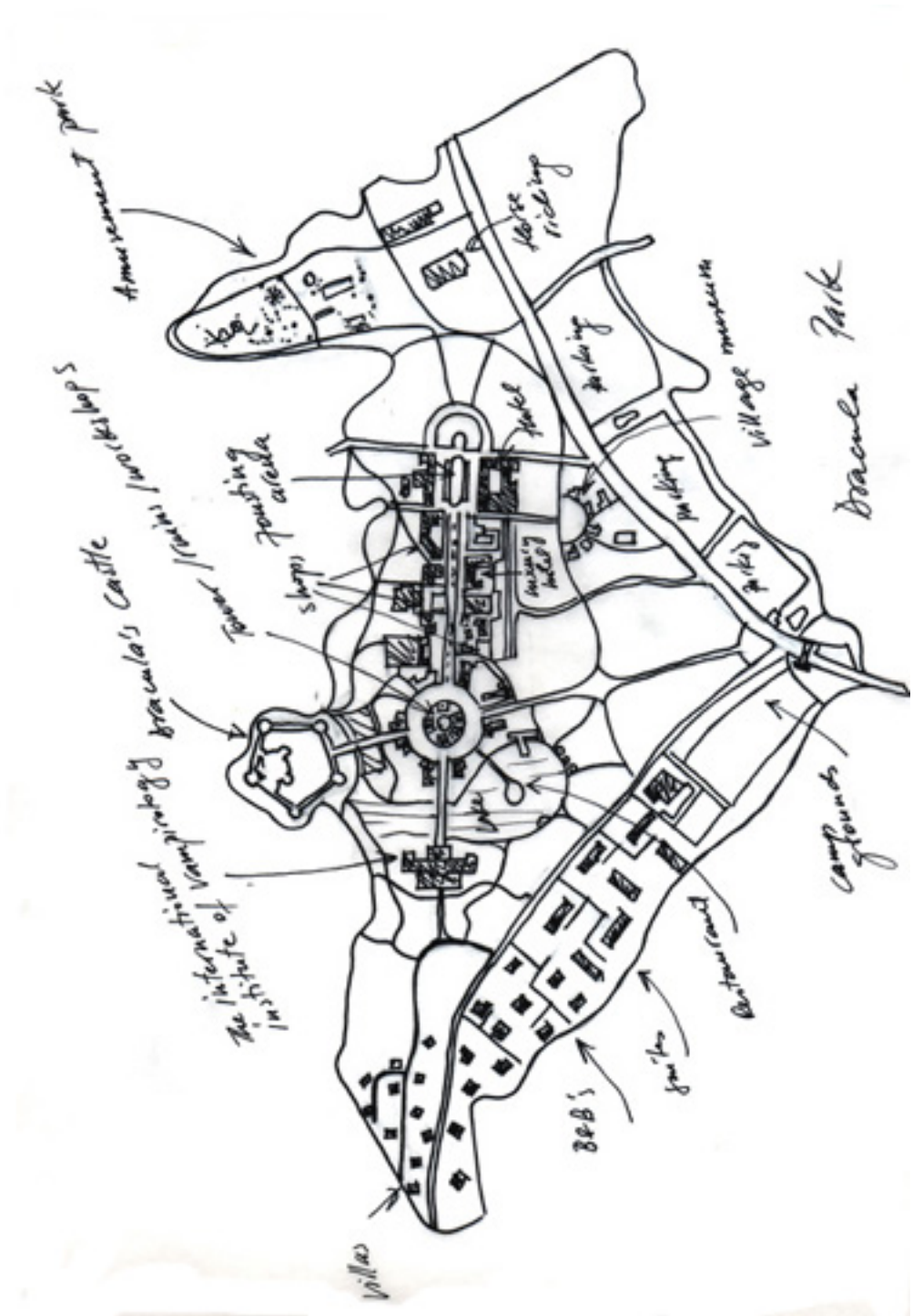
I look at the plan and the vision of the park as a kind of hopeful snapshot of this imaginary. The plan was ambitious and surprisingly precise. Well into the controversy, the local business community (owners of hotels, restaurants, and bar, as well as the main print shop and the TV/cable company) published two maps of Sighişoara that included the park as if it had already been built. One of them also included a detailed map of the park itself, utopic in its colored, beautiful computer-designed layout, with straight lines, perfect circles, and nothing left unsolved. I look at the map now and I can't blame anybody for the pleasure of taking the park all in, like some make-believe fantasy world that could be brought into reality. A new town, built from the ground up, better than anything present, anything real.

The park was designed around a core that paralleled the concept of most parks, with a main street flanked by stores, restaurants, and hotels. At one end, an amphitheater and a jousting arena, and, at the other, a circle running around a faux old tower and lined with more shops. The circle sprouted into four streets leading to the main entrance gate (called "symbolic gate"), a restaurant in the middle of an artificial lake, the "International Institute of Vampirology," and Dracula's castle (enclosed in a pentagonal wall, and neighboring a labyrinth garden). The park also had an amusement park with rides, a horse-riding center, a large area dedicated to economy tourist lodging, parking, and train stations for the mini-line that was to be built to take tourists up to the park. The plan

floated on a beige, gravely background, with no geographical context, next to a 47 point legend and a border of mini ads for the sponsoring tourist businesses.

Seen from above, the park didn't look very different from the hundreds of socialist neighborhoods, designed from the ground up since the 1970s, but never realized as intended. The flatness of the plan made the socialist utopia lie seamlessly on the consumerist one, and touch, through the straight and clean lines, the promise of a Disneyland. I can say with certainty that most people from Romania have not experienced a theme park, first hand, in their lives, but they were able to attach themselves, with fury, to the dream of one.

Regardless of what the exact plan was to fill the park with constructions and décor, the imagination of those talking about it seemed to converge towards a neat fantasy world that was not as much about Dracula as it was about a permissible and permeable "medieval." The park was to be a eclectic collection of signs pointing to a past that both locals and Westerners wished had existed, a Mickey Mouse kind of history (Wallace, 1996), sanitized and shrunk down to a self-contained "land." Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls it "Distory": "Distory, at least to date, is about history as it should have happened—the best, only the best, nothing but the best. To the degree that the tourism product is 'the concrete expression' of the 'most attractive images possible,' it too is the Distory business" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, p. 176).



Illustation 7: Map of Dracula Park

Drawing force from the medieval aura of the citadel, a few kilometers away, the park was to transcend the "hereness," the "locality"[34] that tourism normally relies on, through the vagueness of "medieval." "Medieval" was, for the park, a hopeful meeting point with a European history that it has been denied full participation in. It didn't seek to reproduce an authentic version of that history, but rather a utopic version that Western Europe itself had imagined: a history of knights, castles, jousting, princesses, craftsmanship, leather, and metal. Dracula Park was a doubling of utopia: not only the utopia of a western service center (whose physical realization by western standards was utopic in itself), but also the Disneyesque utopia of the West's historical imagination. The park was making visible the desire of the locals to be the West's object of desire.

It seems that the park, as planed, was to teach the new consumer-citizens of Sighişoara (and the surrounding Romania) of what different kinds of consumers they could be (and could not). There were six kinds of lodging, discretely separating people into what—with some insistence—could become the new classes: camp grounds, apartments, pensions/bed and breakfasts, individual villas, a hotel, and a luxury hotel in the heart of the "Main Street."

The park offered a coherent and integrated world, a paradise of consumption, where everything could be "had" (Fjellman, 1992). The act of imagining it relied on a postmodern kind of authenticity (Dorst, 1989), where the referent against which everything was being judged was located in the imagination and gaze of a generic Western tourist. This kind of authenticity was not MacCannel's (1989) "staged authenticity," built on the display and performance of identity or of a 'real life' of some

34 See other discussions on the term, as "place-image," an enduring relationship of identity between people and a place, and also a grounded, authentic particularity in the face of various homogenizing tendencies (Shields, 1991, p. 60); as part of a global gaze (Wilk, 1995); as a quality, a property of social life and as a structure of feeling (Appadurai, 1996); as a way to account for the material existence of the land, nature, landscape (Lippard, 1997); a construction that reveals itself through a careful analysis of social and spatial processes (Urry, 1995); as a "pull of place" (Lippard, 1997, p. 7), or as competitive difference and commodification of culture and identity (Greenwood, 1989; Linnekin, 1997; MacCannel, 1989, , 1992; Meethan, 2001; Nash, 1996; Norkunas, 1994; Urry, 1995).

sort[35]. In opposition to MacCannel, Urry (1995) suggests that we are now in a "post-tourist" era: "post-tourists" delight in inauthenticity and its games, and end up taking it seriously, bracketing the stage that the destination is built on. I am, however, skeptical of him, as well. If Urry is right, then, regardless of the social and geographical context, the park should have succeeded and should have been welcomed as an intelligible and convincing possibility. But, what Urry fails to do is ground the "post-tourists" in the historical and political contexts that make them possible. Post-tourists and post-tourist destinations, if they exist, are the sign of a particular position in the geopolitical order, a way to mark the privilege of leisure and the choice of where to leisure. A few years ago, I listened to outraged tourists in Budapest who were complaining about a hoax played on them: the catacombs under the castle hill were inhabited by "hommo consumeris," which, it turned out… was them! They demanded that the catacombs display authentic vestiges of whatever happened to be there throughout history. This would have been acceptable in London, they said, but not here. The catacombs violated their expectations and were seen as an irresponsible and disrespectful treatment of the Western tourists who spent money to come all the way there.

Dracula Park was also violating expectations. It was "lying" about the historical reality that it was supposed to represent (not by focusing on Dracula, but by focusing on a common, albeit fantastic, European past), and exceeding the limits of the place's performativity (Coleman & Crang, 2002). It was also aspiring to a business solution that should not have been available, by any means, to a small town in Eastern Europe. Participation in what the Comaroffs call casino capitalism (J. Comaroff & Comaroff, 2001), where wealth is created from "nothing" (read imagination, the virtual, services)

35 MacCannel places tourist settings on a continuum, arranged in neat stages, from purely "front" to purely "back." The back-back region is the one that interests tourists the most, the region that motivates their tourist action, and this is where authenticity is located, as what tourists hope for is a 'peek.'

was crossing, too abruptly, the development line. Instead of utopic dreams, Sighişoara should focus on more reasonable dreams of a functioning, efficient, and diversified economy.

ꕥ

None of the locals had any material reason to believe that the park could be built in this form and as seamlessly as promised: who would actually do the building, where would most of the materials come from? But, many still did. Letters to the editor published in the local newspaper, and often authored by well educated local personalities (like the principal of the largest high school in town), expressed excitement and impatience at finally being able to walk through the park, to take their children there, and to be proud that such a park, worthy of any Westerner's envy, could be built in their hometown. With no regard to the 25 USD entry fee, they reveled in the possibility to access 'culture' and 'entertainment' again, in a town where the only cinema had just closed down, and the only cultural events seemed to be a handful of dirty and noisy festivals and fairs. It is not surprising, then, that criticisms of the project were read by these people as well as the park proponents as attacks over their right to live the dream that people in the West were already living.

The park lived, then, in the perceived gap between a local economic reality and the Western dream (in its colorful form of a *land* and in that of its imagined local economic benefits). What was at stake here was the power of the imagination to pull this town out of its economic recession and its almost dystopic existence. By 2001, most of the formerly state owned textile and ceramics factories were either closed, bankrupt, or severely affected, with thousands of unemployed people making ends meet with local

seasonal work or illegal or short term hard physical labor in the EU. The spectacle of unintelligible consumption put on by streams of tourists passing through the town and the promise of revenue that they offered—if only they stayed a little longer and consumed a little more—filled that gap with credible solutions that had to be about tourism, consumption, and bringing in foreigners and their money. The park would metonymically replicate the object of desire in a way that—as the evolving controversy showed—was not about usurping Germanness, but about accessing the West through it. As one informant put it, "that was it, the project was a beautiful story, it was beautifully presented, and it gave everyone hopes—goodness, there's going to be a castle, and a lake, and an arena… tourists will come, and we will all live well…"

DRACULA

The park also promised to bridge the gap between what people perceived foreigners came looking for and what they found, between how Sighişoara/Transylvania/Romania were represented abroad and how they were represented to local and national audiences. For Agathon and the other supporters of the park, Dracula could serve as a broad brush that would smooth over the otherwise abrupt differences in how local history and identity was represented by different groups and to different audiences. Dracula could be a unifying varnish on top of a contested local history, Dracula could be a solution that articulated, in unthreatening ways, the German local history, the Romanian obsession with a national past, and the exploiting Western gaze. At least this is what Agathon promised. If tourists wanted Dracula, why not give it to them—if Transylvania was the (generic) space where his legend was placed, Romania owned it, in some way, since Romania owned Transylvania, as well. Agathon also expressed a blind belief in the power of Dracula as a consumer symbol and Romania's

rights over it: "This myth exists, and I package it nicely, I put a bow on it, and sell it. It is stupid to go to Switzerland to buy watches and wallets with Dracula on them, a country that has no relationship to the legend. It is stupid for the plastic teeth to be made in Turkey and not Romania."[36] His righteous crusade to own the rights to the symbol was—he suggested—vindicated when later rumors surfaced that the owners of the Dracula copyrights threatened to sue.

Dracula could also be the shiny solution that filled up the spaces in between national pride and abjection, could be a way of turning the debasing Western gaze around, repackaging this second world place into an object of desire. Dracula was already valuable currency in a global economy of meaning and a tourist mimetic economy (Greenblatt, 1991), and therefore it could be a trick that would circumscribe a promising but neglected *local* to a powerful global economy of desire. "My duty," Agathon insisted, "is to use this Dracula pretext to put the foreign tourists in contact with Romania, the real Romania, the profound Romania, the Romania of faith, the Romania of history, and the Romania of tradition."[37] Surprisingly, this made perfect sense to most of the people in Sighişoara to whom I talked. I expected a theme-park-sized commitment to this symbol to be at least intimidating. Instead, there was mostly indifference punctuated with tactical, but unconvinced, excitement.

The objects on the vendors' tables—in the citadel and around it—rely on the same kind of hopeful and resigned pull, played out through the distracted and entropic nature of the intelligibility of the objects they were selling. The Draculas—mugs, postcards, statues, t-shirts—did not claim any stable relationship or lasting commitment to a particular representation of the place, in the same way the exact same merchandise didn't

[36] Dan Matei Agathon. 2001. "S-a hotarât: Dracula Land pe Breite!," in *Jurnalul Sighisoara Reporter*, July 11-17, page 4.
[37] Dan Matei Agathon. 2001. "Gata cu vorbele. Vom lăsa buldozerele să vorbească!" in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*, November 28 – December 4, page 4.

do that in other tourist spots all over Romania (and in particular Transylvania). The objects existed in the spaces between the local-global articulations that defined the place (Massey, 1994), in the spaces where they get broken, syncopated, distracted. Their existence on the table relied on the precariousness and partiality of their signification, in its tolerated, matter of fact half-imposture. The objects were not hybrids, in the sense proposed by Cassey (1999), they just happened. "You never know what they're looking for," a vendor told me in 2005. "You have to have something for everybody." The Dracula could fix the tourists' eyes just enough for a conversation to be started. Just like Agathon trying to lure tourists into loving the "real Romania," the vendors would immediately push onto them generic 'traditional' merchandise—table cloths mass produced in a family-owned shop in Cluj or Russian dolls and wooden jewelry from China.[38]

Dracula Park was a loud attempt to materially articulate the desire to be desired, and, in that, it was an offensive attempt to erase it. The successful opponents of the project were able to reinforce this desire's gaping contours, and in particular the distance between the limitations of Romanianness and the possibilities of Germanness. Heritage (whether production or remembrance) was central to this process.

But, as the controversy around the project showed, Dracula was far from being an innocent trick. It was, in fact, perceived as a political project that articulated—over a thirty year arc—the Romanian nationalist project of rewriting Transylvanian history with a global (well, Western) symbolic economy.

[38] For similar, but more purposeful, "toying with tourists," see (Evans-Pritchard, 1989).

Illustration 8: Dracula souvenirs on vendor tables in *Piaţa Cetăţii* (2005)

The first time I heard the story—from an informant that had also been involved in the controversy—I found it hard to believe. Of course, yet another conspiracy theory. We were talking about the reproduction of the local Romanian elite, and how several important figures (the mayor, important business owners and local councilmen) happened to have equally important fathers, several decades ago: mayors, members in the party structure, members in the secret police. Membership in the secret police seemed to have had and still have quite an explanatory power, not only in who was and stayed important, but also in how Sighişoara got to be the way it is. Linking Dracula to Romania and to Sighişoara in particular was a project that was started in the 1970s when "an American" related to one of the recent American presidents spent six months in Sighişoara and mused about the possibility of building a Dracula theme park. The American left, but some of his work—my informant insisted—remained in the drawers of the secret service,

to be revived again through the current park project. Another informant told me that Ceauşescu invited an "American" to come and write about how the real inspiration for Bram Stocker's Dracula was the Romanian prince Vlad Ţepeş[39]. After the "American's" visit to Sighişoara, two material allusions to this connection (Vlad Ţepeş's statue and the plaque on Casa Vlad Dracul) appeared. The statue, a rough bust, was actually placed in between the Town Hall and the Evangelical Church, on the main tourist route, in the 1980s, and is an obligatory stop for tour groups and wandering tourists. Its presence, just like the plaque's, are taken as proof of the reality of the connection. Most locals have forgotten about the statue: gray and dark, receding into the landscape, passed by countless times on the way to dropping off a request or a file at some office in the Town Hall. Tourists, surprisingly, always seem to find it and treat it with excitement, reading carefully the inscription with the name and the years he was leading another country south of the mountains. No explicit connections to the town. The plaque, though, pointed to a connection, to be interpreted together with the statue: "Vlad Dracul, price of Valahia, lived in this house between 1431-1435."[40] Vlad Dracul, tour guides will explain, was Vlad Ţepeş's father, and Vlad Ţepeş was born around the same time, so Vlad Ţepeş was probably born here. Dracula was born here. And, if anyone is still confused about why the house is important, there is a metal sign in the shape of a vampire inviting customers inside the restaurant housed in the building.

[39] I don't have any proof, but I suspect that this story is, in some way, connected to the collaboration between a Romanian academic and an American one (both working in the U.S.), collaboration that has resulted in a volume that explicitly connects Dracula to Vlad Ţepeş's historical figure (Florescu & McNally, 1973; McNally & Florescu, 1972).

[40] The actual text on the plaque, in Romanian only: "În această casă a locuit între anii 1431 – 1435 domnitorul Ţării Româneşti VLAD DRACUL, fiul lui Mircea cel Bătrîn."

Illustration 9: Sign in front of the *Casa Vlad Dracul* restaurant

Dracula Park was, my informant tried to convince me, just an extension of the project started in the 1970s, a project of the secret service and those continuing its work. For him, it was an occult conspiracy, a conspiracy of the devil and the unfaithful—and he wasn't the only one to describe the project and its results in these terms[41]. To me, though, it looked more like a nationalist one.

Tying Vlad Ţepeş to this place—through a secret service conspiracy or just nailing plaques to a wall—was writing its history as a Romanian one, inscribing a continuous and relevant Romanian presence in a land with an otherwise complex and contested history. Vlad Ţepeş's statue was part of the same project as exhibiting shards of pottery made by prehistoric people said to be the Romanians' ancestors, marking old

[41] Two other people talked about the developments in the citadel in precisely those terms: a satanic conspiracy taking over the town and the region.

Roman—the other ancestors—forts on the map, not too far away from the town, and starting Sighişoara's history, in the local museum as well as history books, not with the German colonists of the twelfth century, but with older Romanian or pre-Romanian communities(I. F. Pascu, 2005).

I never doubted Vlad Ţepeş's connection to Sighişoara or Transylvania while I was growing up in the 80s. For me, the net of familial relationships between the various kings and princes of the other two provinces to the East and South naturally extended, rarified as they were, to my home province of Transylvania. The Romanian past of this space was a story that I was told, and I told myself, for many years. Tepeş was my favorite of all: honest and ruthless, with a sense of justice matched only by my own, while I was sharing ten year old fists and kicks with cheating playmates in the courtyard of my apartment building. In his time, the books said, you could leave a bag of gold in the middle of the road, come back in a week and still find it there. Conservative nostalgias for an iron fist rule in the middle of the disorienting contemporary *transition* are still evoked by often quoting (in articles or political speeches) a poem by Mihai Eminescu, the Romanian national poet: "Why aren't you coming, Ţepeş Lord, to lay your hand on them/ And divide them in two bands: of madmen and of villains/ And forcefully throw them into two large dungeons/ Then set the prison and the madhouse on fire!"[42] (Eminescu, 2003).

It wasn't surprising, then, that the Romanian stake in the historical representation of this space, and of Sighişoara in particular, surfaced as a concern with the offensive blending of the two figures, the national, dignified Ţepeş and the foreign, caricatured Dracula. And, it wasn't surprising to me that these concerns were centered not in

42 "Cum nu vii tu, Ţepeş doamne, ca punând mâna pe ei/ Să-i împarţi în două cete: în smintiţi şi în mişei/ Şi în două temniţi large cu de-a sila să-i aduni,/ Să dai foc la puşcărie şi la casa de nebuni!"

Sighişoara, but in Bucharest. Octavian Paller, a well-known Romanian intellectual, said he was offended by France Press's innuendos that Dracula was a reason for Romanian national pride. Many people have commercialized their heroes, he said, but this is not the same thing.[43] Some people wrote, later in the winter, about the Dracula-Ţepeş connection as an attack on national identity and dignity.[44] What was most surprising to me was that these concerns were not louder and more wide spread. It was almost like either the connection was accepted, to some degree, or it was feared that making any national identity arguments would be read as a siding with the extreme right political parties like România Mare or a continuation of the pre-1989 national state ideology. On more than one occasion, Agathon brushed these concerns aside, claiming that the project would actually make fun of the Dracula figure, and not take it seriously, as a historical representation. The myth of Dracula exists whether we want it or not, he said on more than one occasion, so we might as well take advantage of it[45].

The veracity of the Ţepeş-Sighişoara connection was attacked either frontally (by insisting that there is no historical connection between the two) or by suggesting that there are better connections to other sites (Bucharest and Snagov, where Ţepeş was buried) and that the park should be moved there.

The questioning of a historical relationship between Sighişoara and Ţepeş came early in the controversy. Its use in fighting the project—I am reminding you, located outside the town, on a forested plateau—relied on ignoring slippages and creating connections that all articulated, in particular ways and with lasting results, the Dracula Park project and site, the Sighişoara citadel, and German heritage rights. The story of

---

[43] Paller, Octavian. 2001. "Editorial—Draculomanie," in Adevărul, October 9.
[44] Stoiculescu, Cristian D. 2002. "Se distruge identitatea națională a României," in *România Liberă*, February 28, page 14.
[45] Dan Matei Agathon. 2001. "Gata cu vorbele. Vom lăsa buldozerele să vorbească," in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*, November 28 – December 4, page 4.

stopping the building of the park is the story of the productive work of filling up any threatening gaps between the three and turning a discussion about a development project in the middle of the woods into one about German/Saxon heritage. Granted, Agathon invited "the German element" into the conversation by exposing the structure of desire that the project was building on. But, Agathon was relying on the German minority's status of 'model minority,' its historical guilt over WWII events and post-WWII migration to Germany, and its reluctance to make any political, historical, and territorial claims. Agathon imagined in it an easy ally, not an enemy.

It was quite a shock, then, when the first voice to protest against the project was that of Sighişoara's German priest, Hans Bruno Fröhlich. In a respectful and firm language, he did what I haven't seen any member of the local German community do before or since: claim symbolic ownership over the town and the citadel, an explicit political voice, and a historically based stake in the future of the town. These all added up to an open contestation of the otherwise unspoken of Romanian dominance over the region and the town.

> Historically, this project affects me (and not only me, but also the other Germans from Sighişoara) directly, for the simple fact that our ancestors, that is the Saxon craftsmen, are the builders of this citadel. If we set aside the myth of the vampire and try to move from fiction (started by Bram Stocker's novel) to historical reality, then we are dealing with a falsification of this historical reality. It's just an undocumented hypothesis that Vlad Ţepeş was born in Sighişoara. And even if his father (Vlad Dracul) was here, he was here not as a builder of the citadel or ruler of the city, but as refugee from Valachia (1431-1436), who, with the help of the Hungarian king Sigismund, prepared his army. … 'Dracula-Land' would just be a part of a series of such phenomena (historical falsification). I need to remind you of the so-called 'Casa Vlad Dracul,' now a restaurant. Few people know that this used to be a shelter for old and poor women, property of the German Evangelical Parish until the 1960s, but abusively taken by the Romanian state. Vlad Ţepeş couldn't have been born in this house, because the house was built 200 years later. I am not nationalistic or chauvinistic. I do not contest the continuity of the Romanian people in Transylvania, but only where this can be proven with the means of the modern historical science. And, after all, territorial continuity does not say anything about the quality of a people. But, if the

> continuity is what is sought, this cannot be based on undocumented hypotheses and even lies[46].

Focusing on Ţepeş as an unfaithful historical representation of Sighişoara was then taken up by other critics of the project, but the argument faded off in time, possibly because it had the potential of alienating the Romanian majority and feeding suspicions of a malevolent German conspiracy against the project. There were also some claims of symbolic ownership over the citadel and the town that were slowly abandoned, as well. On the day of the official launching of the project, November 5, 2001, a national newspaper published a letter from a local German lady, speaking about the Dracula project as an insult to her "inheritance from (her) ancestors":

> For us, Saxons everywhere, a Dracula-Land in Sighişoara is like a punch in the eye. We feel like the *moţ* [Romanians living Apuseni mountains, and one sacred locus of Romanian nationalist pride] having to put garden gnomes in the yard of Avram Iancu [a *moţ* national hero]. … We feel attacked and humiliated.

I later met her. She did self identify as a Saxon, but she was far from being a Saxon nationalist. In her late sixties, smart and opinionated, and married to a Romanian from Bucharest, she was often very critical of the local and diasporic German community. The Dracula Park project, she explained, just hit a bit too close to home.

The explicit ethnic content of the controversy was soon left aside, and picked up again only as a call to "tolerance and inter-cultural dialogue" by Liga Pro-Europa, an NGO specializing in ethnic politics and involved in the protest.

---

[46] Hans Bruno Fröhlich. 2001. "Sighişoara nu are nevoie de un 'Dracula-Land'," in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*, August 1-7, page 16. (my translation)

HERITAGE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION

The repeated, protesting German voices left a well-beaten (by mid fall) discursive path between the historical citadel and the project, several kilometers away. The supporters of the project participated in the same discussion, trying to convince everybody that the money generated from the park business will be used to rehabilitate the crumbling citadel, while trying to argue that there is no material, physical connection between the project site and the citadel. The two, supporters argued, should be treated as two separate things.

The critics of the project, though, were able to cohere around the issue of heritage and, in the end, heritage and heritage protection emerged as the dominant discourse of the controversy. For that to happen, clearer connections between the project and the project site, on the one hand, and the citadel, on the other, had to be established.

A letter from the local German Evangelical Church addressed to the Mayor and the Local Council and published in the local newspaper, reminded everyone of the effect of the yearly Medieval Festival on the citadel. This resonated with many locals and even people outside Sighişoara familiar with the festival. That year, their community's loss due to the festival was real and material—vandalized churches and cemetery, stolen objects from a church, and the wear of 30,000 people a day on the already degrading streets. The theme park was likely, they were afraid, to attract the same kinds of tourists.

> It is well known that we (that is the Evangelical Parish) own maybe the most important historical monuments in this citadel (the Church on the Hill, the Monastery Church, the Cemetery on the Hill, etc.) For these reasons, we are of course more sensitive to and more aware of what is going on here. In the past few years, the so-called 'Medieval Festival' reached a size that cannot be beneficial to this medieval citadel, which will not survive much longer under these conditions. In the same time, the festival bothers us, as inhabitants of this citadel. … There were desecrated tombs in the Cemetery on the Hill; the police had to remove those people from the cemetery almost every hour. We found the Monastery Church in total dismay. There was vomit by the door, human excrements next by

> the exterior walls; like every year, the little park between the Monastery Church and the Clock Tower is completely devastated. People broke ledges out of the Covered Stairway and entered the parish garden. They walked on the citadel wall as if they were on a boulevard. The heaviest blow was the theft of the Bible from the Holy Altar of the Monastery Church. … Events like these, as well as the construction of the 'Dracula-Land' theme park, create an atmosphere that invites 'bad spirits.' We are not talking about ghosts or vampires. [47]

The project was to be built on a plateau outside the town, five kilometers away from the citadel on the road, and less than two in a straight line. The initial plans included a cable car that would take tourists directly from the citadel to the park and back. As expected, the cable car came immediately under attack as possibly affecting the structural integrity of the hill that the citadel was built on. Another fear was that the construction work as well as the added weight to the Breite hill (neighboring the citadel hill) would cause land slides and movements, and would possibly affect, in the end, the citadel.

The stakes in creating these relationships were not to convince anyone in particular, but to create a large enough base to allow for a general public concern and for the intervention of more and heavier actors. The debate could not have been won locally and on locally-only intelligible terms—it had to be expressed universally, in a language that translated the ambiguity of the situation into clearer lines and accommodated diverse stakes and interests. The debate had to enter the realm of rights, rescues, and protection, a realm to which specialists, governmental and non-governmental organizations could attach themselves. There was, of course, a pull, as well. These NGOs, specialists, international organizations are in the situation to constantly justify their existence—every claim of having a stake, every attempt at intervention, every utterance on the topic is proof of the value and necessity of their presence.

---

[47] 2001. "Scrisoare de Protest," in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*, August 1-7, page 16.

As early as November, the director of Mihai Eminescu Trust (Jessica Douglas Home), the president of Siebenburgisch-Sachsishe Stiftung[48](H.C. Habermann), the president of the World Museum Fund (Bonnie Burnham), representatives of GTZ[49] Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit and other organizations, historians and specialists in South-Eastern Europe signed a letter addressed to the Romanian President, Ion Iliescu. They expressed their worry that the park would mean the destruction of the local heritage and "will transform the history of Romania in a caricature. Far from being a reason for pride, it will bring Romania nothing but ridicule. It is just as if the French accepted building a Disneyland inside Versailles, or the Italians—in Venice."[50]

The Mihai Eminescu Trust (MET) had been active in the villages in the region, rescuing the Saxon heritage from abandonment and destruction, but not in Sighişoara. Its voice and prestige grew considerably with this controversy, and in the years that followed, MET got increasingly involved in issues connected directly to Sighişoara.

The first project, born out of the pain of the Dracula Park controversy, was the implementation of the UNDP Local Agenda 21 program.[51] MET financed part of the project, acted as the main intermediary between UNDP Romania and the Sighişoara City Hall, organized and mediated the public debates and the workshops that led to the adoption, by the City Hall and representatives of the local community, of the local plan for sustainable development. The plan was printed in a glossy volume and immediately

---

[48] The Association of the Transylvanian Saxons

[49] Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit—a federally owned enterprise of the German government that supports it "in achieving its development-policy objectives. It provides viable, forwardlooking solutions for political, economic, ecological and social development in a globalised world. Working under difficult conditions, GTZ promotes complex reforms and change processes. Its corporate objective is to improve people's living conditions on a sustainable basis" from GTZ website: http://www.gtz.de/en/unternehmen/1698.htm . It is heavily involved in the Sibiu area, west of Sighişoara, working with the German and Saxon architecture.

[50] 2001. "Conservare şi Restaurare," in *România Liberă*, November 5, page 14. (translated from Romanian)

[51] UNDP Project ROM 98/012, 0033238;

forgotten by all parties involved, in particular the City Hall. In November 2004, MET organized a conference for the sustainable development of the region, bringing together an impressive roster of local NGOs, representatives of international governmental and non-governmental organizations, possible funders, technical and cultural experts, representatives of the local and regional administrations. With this conference, MET loudly claimed the status of sole regional expert and the role of broker in contracting and distributing funding to the Saxon region in the area of sustainable development, heritage preservation, and heritage-based tourism. Since, MET has obtained large grants from the Packard Humanities Institute and UNDP Romania In 2006, MET signed a partnership with the Sighişoara City Hall in order to manage the natural preserve of Breite, where Dracula Park was to be built. Also, it had taken two historical towers into custody (the Butchers' Tower and the Furriers' Tower), taking responsibility for their restoration and preservation. MET Romania is also now based in the Sighişoara citadel, where it owns and rents at least two buildings.

In Sighişoara and the 'Saxon Triangle'[52] at least, crisis and the need for rescue are valuable resources. That is not to say that the old Saxon villages, the fortified churches, other kinds of buildings are not degrading, or that the old Saxon dialects and all kind of associated knowledges are not being lost and forgotten. As somebody pointed out during the controversy, so are the old Hungarian rural palaces (*conace de grofi*) all over Transylvania, looted and actively destroyed during the socialist period and used by the agricultural cooperatives for storage. And so are, I would add, all kinds of other buildings, and objects, and knowledges, Hungarian, Romanian, Romani, some older than others. Then, why all the worried attention to Saxon heritage?

[52] The area colonized by German Saxons, between Sibiu, Sighişoara, and Braşov. The term was pushed for by the MET and has stayed as a powerful symbol of the area.

Producing Saxon heritage in South-East Transylvania is a project that mobilizes certain Western nostalgias, moneys, and interventions by creating historical connections and claiming stakes in the fate of this space. I interpret MET's insistence on using the English translation of the name 'Sächsen,' *Saxon*, and not *German* (pushed by actors from Germany interested in a pan-German identity) as a symbolic and powerful way to assert the right to intervene and manage their and others' interventions. Nostalgias for an autochthonous Saxon heritage now about to disappear meet nostalgias for a lost English/Saxon past, and justify rescue interventions that target both the built and the natural landscape. The meadows, for example, were constructed as how the English meadows used to be before the extensive sheep raising started several centuries ago, and Prince Charles, on his several visits to the area, talked charmingly about the quaint rural, natural atmosphere, now long lost in his own country. Interpreting the fate of particular buildings and places as a crisis, as in need of rescue, not only offers organizations like MET a publicly recognizable raison d'être, but also mobilizes particular resources along particular paths. MET's initial funders were private individuals and foundations in England (referred to by people that I talked to in Sighişoara as the "English aristocracy"), but have now extended to large international organizations and foundations that maybe would not have gotten involved in the area otherwise. The money is stubbornly channeled into heritage protection/rescue projects, only obliquely taking into consideration the larger social problems that need more immediate attention (large rural Romani populations, with no access to proper social services, jobs, political representation).

Insisting on the Saxon heritage crisis attaches value to this particular local ethnic dimension, to the detriment of others, reinforcing and participating into local ethnic hierarchies as well as ideas about what exactly is European/Western/civilized/worthy in

Transylvania and what is not. This insistence also interprets the recent past—the almost fifty years of *Romanian* socialism and centrally planned economy—as destructive, irresponsible, and having a potentially dangerous momentum in the present and the near future. A lot of heritage has been lost and more will be lost, if the right kind of intervention doesn't happen, they seem to suggest; heritage production is in this case, as always, not about the past, but about interpreting and making claims about the present and the future. Organizations like MET are involved, then, not only in sorting through the various problems and focusing attention on selected ones, but also in mapping out solutions for future development.

The modernist nostalgias that I alluded to before find expression in a developmental imaginary centered well west of Sighişoara. This imaginary is born out of guilt and fear about what has gone wrong in the past in the West and locally, assumes, announces, and cultivates a position of privileged vision, and orders and disciplines local desires for the West/development/consumerist abundance/or however we might want to call it. It is, itself, a space of desire for a utopic do-over, for another chance to avoid mistakes made in the past. It is not homogenous in solutions and projections, by any means, as it can both deny desires to modernize and allow for skipping a developmental generation or two, all the way to what now many refer to, in different ways, as "sustainable development." Concretely, these ideas about sustainable development are always connected to leveraging the value of the local Saxon heritage through small-scale tourism and agricultural/crafts production, as well as protecting the natural environment, now increasingly reformulated as "natural heritage."

Making the Dracula Park controversy about the Saxon heritage did not mean, then, avoiding discussion of the park as a development project. On the contrary, it was precisely about that.

DEVELOPMENT

The park was proposed as a development project that would—just like a silver bullet—solve all the economic and social problems of the area, create thousands of jobs, allow for the replacement of all infrastructure, and attract a life-bringing infusion of capital into the local economy. With its professional language of scientific management and planning, the project promised to fill the very desires that brought this plan into the world, promised to materialize them and to bring Sighişoara into the West. The project, as unrealistic as it might have been, was a loud assertion of a right to develop and a blind belief in the certainties of development. In the same time, it was building on a general sense of urgency about the current historical moment, with economic opportunities that abounded, but were quick to pass.

The first critiques that engaged in the discussion of the park as a development project suggested that the expectations outlined in the feasibility study were unreasonable and probably never to become reality. The one million tourists a year promised were, by all calculations, an exaggeration, and the projected cost of the entire park was a fraction of what would normally cost to build a ride that would attract some tourist attention[53]. These critiques made a home in the media, in particular, often as professional evaluations, taking the intentions of the park very seriously. The development discussions were quite thin, in particular compared to the more historical/heritage-based ones, but picked up force when it became clear to everyone that the IPO has failed, that general investor confidence was low, and that the project would not raise enough money. The critiques, though, were still expressed in a language that reflected fascination with the new emerging neoliberal order and invoked a development imaginary that was

[53] "[O]ne of the latest white knuckle rides can cost in excess of $200m," while Dracula's castle was going to be built for less than $1.8m, in Tom Pilston. 2002. "Mickey Mouse with Fangs," in *The Independent on Sunday*, January 27, pp. 18-21.

congruent with that of the project's proponents: a linear view of progress, faith in the business spirit, a belief that Romania had to be 'pulled out' of its backwardness. But, at the same time, the critiques expressed a lack of trust in the ability of the informal heirs of the socialist order to perform acceptably within that imaginary. There were fears of corruption and taking advantage of a still vulnerable system, and there were fears of incompetence and the inability to see long-term.

Especially towards the end of the controversy, the developmental discussions seemed to be located in a space of critique rooted in the conviction that there were *particular* kinds of lessons to be learned from the experience of the more developed countries. Just copying solutions would be destined for failure, as they were very likely to repeat mistakes that the locals (thirsty for development) were unable to recognize. Unreasoned desire for the prosperity of the West was seen with the same incredulous annoyance that practitioners of cargo cults were probably looked at in the past: mimicking one hyperbolic sign of the West was expected to invoke a whole world of worry-free prosperity. There were sacred boundaries that were unlawfully traversed, skipping decades of 'development' and trying to arrive (erasing Cold-War hierarchies that many were involved in) at a common point in history.

Summarized under one word—sustainability—the correct solution was meant to put the easterners into their place. Sustainability invoked a body of knowledge and experience that was needed and that justified the intervention of the critiques, and it also located the solution in a nostalgic rethinking of the Western past. It turned Sighişoara and its surroundings into a playground organized around preservation of the natural (untainted) environment and the remnants of the Germanic colonists. It was, in a way, an

attempt for deliverance, through a developmental do-over and a taming of the dangerous developmental desires of the ignorant locals[54].

Concretely, the proposed sustainable solutions were built around small scale tourism and agricultural/crafts production (in no way capable of building a real competition to Western economies) that relied on the saved built and natural heritage.

By now (2008), sustainability has actually reached the status of preferred discourse in the context of non-governmental activity in Romania: most environmental and developmental organizations formulate their mission, objectives, and programs through a language of sustainability (financial, environmental, social) and use it successfully to oppose governmental programs and interventions.

At the time of the park controversy, though, this language hadn't entered the public discourse. The group of local protesters that I have already mentioned earlier formed a legally registered organization in November 2001. They were brought together by their opposition to the project, but had to contend with the diversity of backgrounds, interests, and reasons for opposing the park. One of the members, who had been opposing the project on environmental grounds (that it was to be built in a protected natural area, Breite) suggested"'EcoBreite," a name that he had already been using publicly in his protests. The other members were a bit reluctant, as they felt their own reasons for opposing the project (historical representations, religion, economy, etc.) would not be represented. At one of their meetings, one of the members brought a friend who was visiting from Germany, and he suggested *Nachhaltiges Schäßburg*, the German for "Sustainable Sighişoara," awkwardly translated into Romanian through "Sighişoara Durabilă" (which could also mean "Lasting Sighişoara"). Nobody at the meeting had heard the term before, but the German visitor convinced them that "sustainability" was

[54] See a similar story about a Dutchman trying to set up a pheasant shoot in a Czech village, and getting irritated at the locals' attempts to "develop" (Svašek, 2006).

emerging as the new cool term with a lot of international currency. So "Sustainable Sighişoara" it was.

For Sighişoara Durabilă, sustainability was both a way to critique local approaches to development and to align itself with foreign critiques of the project. It was, in that sense, a double strategy: opposing the project locally, and attracting the support of powerful and big mouthed allies by offering them a reasonable way to insert their own interests and worries into the situation. Thus, Sighişoara Durabilă was involved in reproducing—despite their good intentions—the same West-East/capitalist-postsocialist hierarchies of practice and knowledge that their foreign based allies were invoking.

I was not surprised by the quasi-dialogue that ensued, between "you don't know how to develop" accusations and "you don't let us develop" kinds of resistance. The actual economic feasibility of the theme park project and the actual chances of it delivering the economic results it promised were, by early 2002, no longer at the core of the understandings of the project and the discussions about its realization. For many locals, the intervention of many critics was unintelligible on the terms that it was intended. Sustainable development around heritage tourism was difficult to translate locally, as it relied on small-scale solutions which seemed like an insufficient match to the scale of the economic problems the town and the region were confronted with.

Many of those to whom I talked perceived the "sustainable development" critiques as an ill-willed wall in the way of their own desire to modernize. This was the case even for some of the people who were actively involved in opposing the project. They felt torn between finding an efficient way to fight and siding with what looked to them like a new kind of oppressor. To be sure, some of these feelings came from the decades of official public discourse that identified in historical and contemporary foreign

forces a likely enemy and oppressor. But, the same kind of consciousness was imbibed with perceptions of the projects these opponents of the park had been involved in, locally.

The problem lay in—expectedly—the preservation focus of many of the programs proposed by these organizations. MET (the Mihai Eminescu Trust) was identified by many as an organization strangely preoccupied with preserving Saxon houses in the Saxon villages, renovating them according to traditional techniques, and placing them into closed-circuit tourist use. To be fair, MET only preserved the façade perfectly, and slightly transformed the interior of the houses to match modern use. Still, when I talked to one of the Dracula Park opponents about MET (with which he had allied at the time), he expressed an irritated kind of disappointment at their involvement in the area surrounding Sighişoara. What the MET people want, he insisted jokingly, was to "turn us into human zoos; we should stay in the Stone Age and have foreigners come and gawk at us."

One way that the foreign proposition of sustainability articulated with on-the-ground interests was via environmental concerns. By the time the project controversy took off, there was already a regional environmental rights movement, slightly ethnicized (articulating with Hungarian political movements) but well connected nationally and internationally. Environmental sustainability, even if not accepted as a concern, was a language that was spoken and understood by most of the local public. As proof, the project proponents were genuinely scared of the potential of any environmental opposition, so they founded an organization which they called 'Greenpeace Romania,' and immediately had it issue statements in support of the project. Bernhard Drumel, Executive Director for Greenpeace Austria and Central and Eastern Europe, made

statement denying any connection to the Romanian organization and threatening them to stop using the Greenpeace name, which is a registered trademark.[55]

Breite had already been declared a protected natural area due to its centuries old oak trees and the well preserved biological diversity that it hosted. The accusations that the park would destroy the trees were met with assurances that they would not be cut down; on the contrary, they would be better preserved as part of the park (since they would be surrounded by fences). Of course, the park designers missed the point that the trees were part of a complex ecosystem and that their giant roots were one way the unstable soil of the hill was kept in place. A good part of the discussions in the national press revolved around the trees and the plateau, with accusations flying left and right. The project builders were ignoring the law and the long term implications of the project, and the project environmental opponents were only discovering the plateau now (and not when it was vandalized by shepherds and tourists), when they could gain some political currency from fighting the project.

For the environmentalists involved in the controversy, it was important not only to raise awareness for their reasons to oppose the project, but also to connect and build coalitions with environmental organizations from around the country and even abroad. The destruction of the plateau was, in some sense, a resource, in the same way the destruction of the citadel was a resource for heritage preservation organizations and professionals. I am not implying cynical reasons for people's opposition to the theme park, rather, I am trying to draw attention to the productive force that this opposition had. The coalitions that were formed in that time are still sustained today, and Breite continues to serve as an environmental rights capital for a number of individuals and organizations.

---

[55] Cristea, Romulus. "Din cauza potențialelor pericole ecologice Ministrul Turismului a fost somat să nu mai folosească numele GREENPEACE pentru susținerea programului," in *România Liberă,* February 27, 2002, page 10.

In the middle of the controversy, a professional environmental activist, Stephanie Roth, came to Sighişoara and offered her assistance in strategizing and gathering support for the project's opposition. Local opponents credit her with the idea of sending a series of postcards to the Romanian government, protesting during the UNESCO visit in Sighişoara, and creating lasting coalitions with other environmental organizations. While in Sighişoara, Stephanie Roth heard of another emerging environmental crisis in Roşia Montană (a projected surface gold mine), where she moved and has been working since.

Less than four years later, MET signed a partnership agreement with the Sighişoara Local Council to take over the stewardship of the protected area and to draw in funding and support for its further protection. MET and another British supported organization, ADEPT, have been involved in finding ways to use the relatively unspoiled natural habitat in the region (due to the lack of industrialized, intensive agriculture) for economic (but "sustainable") purposes.

Despite their loudness and national currency, the environmental protests didn't become part of the mainstream of the project opposition until they were engulfed and reformulated by the dominant register of heritage protection. The six-hundred-year-old oak trees became *cultural* heritage as soon as it was "discovered" that they had been planted by the German colonists. The colonists, it turned out, were raising pigs and using the nutritious acorns to feed them in the winter.

Another way Breite became cultural heritage was through remembering festivities and customs connected to that space. Skopationfest, a yearly celebration following the high school graduation, used to bring up on the hill the entire (mostly German) population of the town for a day-long picnic. The tradition is continued—without explicit links to Breite—through a public parade of the new graduates, decorated with oak leaves and daisies.

CONCLUSION

The Dracula theme park project failed for many reasons, but what put it in the grave for good was the ability and power of its opponents to publicly reformulate what was essentially a controversy about development into one about heritage. The struggle was, then, to draw close and convincing connections between the projected park—on a forested plateau outside the town—and the historical citadel, and also to make historical heritage of a particular kind (German) the main reference in discussing the controversy.

I argue that this intense moment was both symptomatic of and actively structuring the transformation of the town. Mediated by an insistent focus on the *German/Saxon* heritage, the town is reimagined in very material ways as a German one, interpreting and justifying stakes in the local development, and allowing a diverse set of actors to intervene. Ultimately, heritage becomes one way concerns about development are expressed, in ways that reproduce and harden West-East/capitalist-postsocialist hierarchies. I suggest that at the core of the process lie the different developmental desires that encounter and compete in this space: an indigenous desire to modernize and access the Western dream, and a Western desire to police it, rooted in modernist nostalgias for a lost past and the yearning for a developmental do-over. These desires worked indirectly and diffusely, infiltrating both sides of the argument, with very long lasting results. Today, Sighişoara remains stuck in imagining the future as wrapped in opportunistic and hopeful exploitations of the German heritage, despite the still small revenues resulting from tourism.

Chapter 2: Gentrification

Among the many self-deprecating jokes that my dad would tell about us, as Romanians, was one about the ephemeral architecture we always seem to produce. "You can't write history with houses (*bordeie)* half buried in the ground, and made out of clay and manure. You could be building them for thousands of years and nobody would find out." This sad irony would find its way through every time we drove through the German villages on our way to the seaside. Tall, strong, two-hundred year old houses, and even older fortified churches perched on a hill, in almost every single village. I was confronted, every summer, with a history that challenged not just the historical project that I was immersed in at school (as a student in the Socialist Republic of Romania), but the righteousness of my very presence in this space. The German South East Transylvania seemed like a different country: it evoked in me not only desires that—of course—were connected to my imagination of the unattainable West, but also a nostalgia for a past that I didn't even have a right to. Around that time, I realized that I didn't know much about my family beyond the visible past couple of generations, and that all my ancestors were very likely to have been some barefoot illiterate peasants, living in houses made of mud and manure. I can't quite name what I felt, every year, driving through the German villages, through Sighişoara, around the citadel hill and past its Lower Town. A surge of sad jealousy, muffled by my inability to really comprehend this built landscape, to relate to it fully without the noise of all these discrepant emotions.

I wonder how much of what I was sensing was inherited, some half buried structure of feeling that I would access every time I was faced with this Germanness I did not belong to. Not words, or stories about what these buildings were about, or how I

should position myself vis-à-vis them as a historical subject, but an emotional watershed, a magic recognition of an affective relationship to something that—in very special ways—was not mine.

Still, no matter how critical I imagine myself to be in relationship to all historical narratives about Transylvania, I am partially the product of a successful, state-led, nationalist project. My historical consciousness is imbued with national memories recreated from history books, novels, films, and random references to the Romanian presence in this space, going back as many thousands of years 1980s historians thought was necessary. With all the efforts I put into a cold, critical analysis of the competing nationalist projects at work here—mainly Romanian and Hungarian—I sometimes find myself, if only for a second, regressing into a place of emotion from where I tried to look at the world as a rightfully-here-Romanian. When I first learned from an informant, also Romanian, that until a few centuries ago Romanians were not allowed to live inside the citadel, or even in the Lower Town[56], I felt a comfortable coming home to emotions that until then, I could not fully explain. My unarticulated yearning for *all these things German* became anchored in a narrative that allowed my emotions to feel real and vindicated. The old, tall buildings became a symbol of my exclusion from history: not just a desire for an Other, but a compassion towards myself. If my way of feeling has any public roots, as I timidly suggested above, there is no surprise that the ethnically motivated expropriations of the first years of communist rule, along with all the deportations, haven't been publicly remembered as such, at least in Sighişoara. The historical German privilege, materialized in the long-lasting buildings of the citadel and

[56] During the 18th century, following a decree of the Austrian emperor Joseph II, the town was opened for residency to Romanians, Hungarians, Armenians, Greeks, and Jews. Several peripheral areas are settled by Romanians, and in 1761, 1006 were living in and around Sighişoara. Until the first half of the twentieth century, the Germans remain the majority, and continue to control the town politically and economically (Machat, 2002).

the Lower Town, has been willingly erased and pushed into forgetting, without much resistance on the part of the Romanian majority. All most Romanians seemed to remember was that the Germans "left" and "abandoned" their homes, and even if these homes were "taken" by the state, it wasn't all that different from what happened to everybody else in Romania. In the 1940s and 1950s, property was nationalized all over the country, in the name of the new political order, leveling, at least in theory, social hierarchies and attempting to erase the material markers of class[57].

I use my own affective relationship to the built landscape of German Sighişoara and assumptions about its public and historical roots as one entry into the problem of property in Sighişoara. In the years following the 1989 regime change, most buildings in the citadel and the Lower Town changed hands, leaving the property of the state and being either returned to descendents of the old owners or sold to new ones. On a background of nation-wide debates about the significance of re-privatizing state property, this move entered, in Sighişoara, the terrain of refashioning not only a classed order, but also an ethnic one. These debates were rarely about the ethnic dimensions of the process, and were reduced—with the consent of the public—to one about individual property rights. The questions that I ask through this chapter are:

In what ways were the two orders—classed and ethnic hierarchies—at odds with each other, and in what ways were they productively articulating? What happens when dismantling, nationally, a state-dominated order is, at the same time, about reformulating, locally, a particular ethnic one? What are the terms on which people experience these changes?

[57] In Romania, large land estates were nationalized in 1945, industries and retail stores in 1948, and housing in 1950 (Chelcea, 2003), with the Decree no. 92 from April 19, 1950 (Zerilli, 2006). The state control over housing was later tightened after 1970s (Clapham & Kintrea, 1996).

I explore these questions through examining gentrification in the Sighişoara citadel. In the first part of the chapter, I consider gentrification as a process connected to both the material renegotiation and reformulation of German privilege in this space and to more general processes of redefining private property and property relations in post-socialist Romania. After I briefly present the recent history of the citadel, I examine this reformulation of German privilege as a result of a suite of laws regarding property restitution working in tandem with the more general process of heritage production in the Old Town of Sighişoara. Through the increasingly denser reiteration of connections (legal, familial, symbolic) between the built landscape/physical space and a vague German referent, the Sighişoara citadel comes to be understood more and more in these ethnic (in the sense of German) terms. In the second part of the chapter, I continue this exploration by presenting the stories of two citadel houses and their residents. In looking at these cases, I use gentrification to talk about the material force of an economy of desire built around German heritage and about its ability to work through and articulate social relationships that are not necessarily about ethnicity.

I use gentrification as a broad term that captures the complexity of the transformations in the Old Town of Sighişoara, and in particular in the citadel. Following Neil Smith (1996), I want to draw attention to the patterns of differentiated investment and disinvestment that are associated with the space of the citadel, to its residential spaces, and to the physical transformations that are taking place here. Smith pushes for complicating class analyses normally attached to processes of gentrification, in ways that make room for and account for both the specificity of the local setting and the larger historical patterns of capitalism's expansion. For Smith, gentrification is, partially, a way to look at class in practice. In a later essay (N. Smith, 2006), he argues that, by now, gentrification has become a global strategy for the conquest of urban space that "cannot

reasonably be dissociated from the transformed landscapes of employment, recreation, and consumption" (p. 199), a strategy that connects, in threatening ways, the state and private capital. He suggests that, in the context of contemporary neoliberalism, there is a "thread of convergence" (p. 201) between processes at work in large cities in what people refer to as "first world" and "third world."

I take, then, gentrification as a useful analytical tool. My site is definitely not a large urban center taken over by large corporate interest, through publicly proclaimed "revitalization." But, I can analyze its transformations by paying attention to the patterns of investment and ownership changes, and how these articulate with historically relevant developments in what I will call, broadly, class formation—which in this case it intersects and works through ethnicity. I find useful David Harvey's observation (2001) that capitalism—now more than ever—gravitates towards and relies on monopoly to create and extract value and to sustain itself. He calls "monopoly rent" the indirect kinds of value extracted from a site that would normally be inalienable, most often through struggles in the areas of culture, meaning, historical representation, heritage—fighting over and accumulating marks of distinctions and uniqueness. Sharon Zukin (1995) makes a similar argument about the role of struggles over culture—meaning, aesthetics, representations—in contemporary urban transformations. Tourism certainly fits the process, as it relies on creating, consuming, and protecting what Harvey called "collective symbolic capital" (p. 404). In addition, in post-1989 Romania, due to the highly instable political climate, the fragmentation of the housing sector, and the general inability to build more housing (Tosics & Hegedus, 2003), residential property have become very attractive to capital.

THE CITADEL

Following the eighteenth and nineteenth century development of the Lower Town into the new commercial center of Sighişoara, the citadel became primarily a residential and a civic space, with all buildings (except the Town Hall, two schools and three churches) serving as homes to the elite of the increasingly pressured German population. Until the Second World War, most of the houses were owned and inhabited by Germans. The first Romanian to own a house in the citadel was Aca de Barbu, an out-of-town soprano who would occasionally perform in Sighişoara in the interwar period (Baltag, 2004).

After the war, on January 14, 1945, 464 ethnic Germans from Sighişoara, 224 men and 240 women, were loaded into cattle train carts and deported to the Soviet Union, joining the almost 70,000 Germans deported there from Romania (Baltag, 2004) in retaliation for their imagined or professed allegiance to the German forces and participation in the war as part of the German Wermacht and Waffen SS. For the next fifty years, thousands more willingly emigrated to Germany, leaving behind the homes that they thus lost any rights over (Wagner, 2000). The majority of the houses were nationalized by the state. Some of these houses in the citadel and the Lower Town were spatially reorganized into multi-family housing and rented out to various people as part of the state housing repartition system.

The houses were old, humid, and cold, an undesirable kind of shelter in a time of rationed and insufficient heating supplies (gas, wood, coal). Also, almost all houses lacked a modern pluming system, with common outhouses in the inner courtyard being periodically emptied by special trucks. Old residents still remember, now humorously, the sound and the smell of the servicing trucks. Without being kept up, the houses became degraded, and for decades they were one of the least desirable housing options

for the people of Sighişoara, that is, for those who could afford to choose. Some of the houses became occupied by the poor, mostly Romani, often squatting without the local housing authority offering them a contract or even keeping a record of their presence there. These were not the only German houses occupied by poor Romani in the area. Entire abandoned German villages were taken over by Romani communities, once they were indirectly forced to settle by the state (Hancock, 2002). These moves were easily integrated in already existing and still persisting discourses about the Romani as uncivilized, dirty, backward, and possibly destructive. Placing the formidable German heritage and the nationally embarrassing poverty of the Romani side by side made visible the social and ethnic hierarchies at work here, and gave them a renewed material force. Placing the two side by side allowed the Romanian majority to successfully ignore any trace of guilt vis-à-vis the deportations and nationalizations: the Romani, and not the Romanians/Romanian state, were responsible for the destruction of the German houses; and, besides, the emigrated Germans were now better off in their new homes in West Germany.

With the obsessive socialist industrialization, the 1970s and 1980s saw massive rural migrations to the city, not only in Sighişoara, but also in the rest of the country. In the case of Sighişoara, entire villages, like the hamlet of Angofa, were practically re-settled and left deserted. Despite the frantic construction of apartment buildings along the lowlands of the Târnava Mare river, there was still a shortage of places to live. Slowly, some of the occupants of the Old Town houses—particularly the poor Romani—were pushed out by the town administration and more desirable tenants—Romanians and Hungarians from neighboring villages—moved in. The several waves of residency erased, over forty long years, traces of the former occupants: walls degraded, moved, or painted over, stories about who lived where mostly forgotten and replaced with new ones.

CHANGING PROPERTY REGIMES

In 2004, when I officially started my fieldwork, I arrived in the middle of a massive transformation: houses changing hands, uses, and looks, people moving in and out. The changes seemed to irradiate from the center of the citadel and its main square (Piața Cetății). Of the ten houses around the square used as multi-family residencies until the mid 1990s, only three were fully inhabited in 2004, and two had mixed (commercial and residential) use. Three others had become hotels (followed by another one in 2006), and one a non-profit that also operated a small tourist café. In the rest of the citadel, the changes were similar, if less dramatic. On Bastionului Street (with one end in the square and the other by the eighteenth century Hungarian Catholic Church), four houses had changed their use from residential to commercial/institutional, and their inhabitants moved out over the previous five years. Several houses lay vacant on Tâmplarilor Street (parallel with the square and Bastionului), with handwritten or printed for sale/for rent signs.

Many of these transformed houses used to belong to the state (they were transferred to the Local Council after 1989) and formed the "residential fund" to be allocated to deserving citizens, subjects of the socialist state. The 1990s brought, not without a struggle, a reorientation of the place of the state in the welfare of its citizens, and a partial withdrawal in terms of some of its obligations, housing being one of them. The "invisible" hand of the market was supposed to replace, at least in intention, the benevolent blind state, placing responsibility on the individual shoulders of individual economic actors. The fate of state property—now expected to become, somehow, private property—became the focus of a decade long political debate that, in the end, also helped shape and orient Romanian politics along the still relevant dimension of state

involvement (social democracy, *democrație socială*) versus the free market (neo-liberal, *politică liberală*).

The question at stake here, as far as residential property was concerned, was whose rights should be protected and what the historical significance of this legislative gesture should be. Unconditionally returning nationalized property to former owners or their descendants was, one side argued, a question of moral reparation and a guarantee of the current market orientation of the Romanian government and economy[58]. Such a move would have interpreted the socialist state as criminal, the social order it created as illegitimate, and the current occupants of these houses as corrupt and accomplices to the massive theft fifty years earlier. Restoring property relations in a way that mimicked pre-WWII arrangements was attempting to not only erase the social memory of fifty years of socialism, but also to rewrite understandings of property as intimately connected to a legitimate class structure, other than what we were left with in 1989. Property would be understood as something that people earned—and had the right to inherit—and not just received from the state, without any individual or familial merit. This move was also well connected to other attempts of the Romanian neo-liberal politicians to detach the state from its previously presumed obligations to its citizens.

Refashioning understandings of property was, in some ways, about the larger project of restructuring not only the economy, but the society as a whole by reshaping relations and subjectivities. Reviewing the relevant anthropological literature about property and ownership, Hann (1998) concludes that property relations—relations between people and objects, broadly conceived--are, ultimately, social relations, relations through which the distribution of social entitlements is decided. From this, rearranging

[58] Elazar Barkan in discussing property restitution in Eastern and Central Europe, shows how it was part of a "economic and moral and historical metamorphosis" and a "means to justice" (2000, p. 113). The process articulated with other, post-1989, moral moves, like lustration, reinstituting churches as national institutions.

access to and rights over buildings becomes rearranging relationships between people and classes of people. Elizabeth Dunn's study of privatization in a Polish factory (2004) shows how changes in ownership and control over the means of production, combined with an infusion of Western capital and technologies of governing, and mediated through requests for "efficiency" and "accountability," induce slow but steady changes in the nature of power and understandings of selfhood (as self-regulating and flexible). Changes in property regimes can be seen, then, as projects of class and subject (re)formation.

The opposite camp of the property restitution debate claimed it was trying to protect the rights of the renters, strongly opposing all attempts to return, unconditionally, all residential property to old owners. The years of residence in all these spaces were interpreted as a promise to be respected, and the state residential property question not as one of moral reparation, but of social responsibility. What will happen to all the renters who will move out? Was the state, or anybody, responsible for them?

These debates were, predictably, connected to larger political struggles, structuring political constituencies and positions, and justifying the existence of the newly born Romanian political class.

The solution, following years of parliamentary debates and political lobbying, came in several waves and materialized through a compromise between the two positions. Following the trajectory of Romania's political orientation, the laws moved from conservatively stipulating real estate restitutions under particular conditions (1995), protecting the renters' rights (1999), and enlarging the scope of restitutions (2001). In certain cases, and if the local political climate allowed for it, the restitution was pursued through civil courts. All these laws had a profound impact on the fate of most residential buildings in the citadel and the Lower Town.

The laws

According to the first law, no.112/1995[59], former owners and their heirs were entitled to the restitution of their buildings/apartments as long as they were still Romanian citizens and still lived in these houses (or the houses were not inhabited at the time). If other people were living there, the former owners would be financially compensated. There was a six-month window in which the former owners could request the restitution, and if that did not happen, or if the houses were currently leased by other people, the renters had the possibility to either renew their lease or even buy the property, if they wished. If they chose to buy, the law prohibited the sale for the next ten years.

A subsequent law, Emergency Ordinance no. 40/1999[60] was adopted by the government under the scare that no. 112 would be modified by the Parliament. It further extended the protection of the renters, by fixing rent and allowing them to renew their leases for another three years.

Many of the old German owners had left the country for Germany and renounced their citizenship, as required by the process of German naturalization. Their situation was further complicated by the fact that, as far as the Romanian state was concerned at the time, they had willingly 'abandoned' their property at the moment of their voluntary emigration. So, after 1995, the majority of houses were made available for sale towards their renters, at prices that were already—at the level of the mid and late 1990s—well below the market value. Despite the ten-year sale prohibition, I kept hearing about house sales and various people transforming and using buildings that they did not own. A lawyer—who assured me that she did not get involved in anything similar—explained to

59 "Legea nr.112 din 25 noiembrie 1995 pentru reglementarea situației juridice a unor imobile cu destinația de locuințe, trecute în proprietatea statului," published in *Monitorul Oficial nr. 279/29 noiembrie 1995.*
60 "Ordonanța de urgență nr. 40 din 8 aprilie 1999," published in *Monitorul Oficial nr.148/8 aprilie 1999.*

me that many of the new owners would make 'hidden papers,' unofficially pre-selling their property, and cashing in early on the new real estate boom in the historical town. With all the asking around, I could not find out about any pre-1946 owners that still lived in their houses as renters and were able to re-gain them through the 1995 law.

After four years of a center-right government and presidency and a timid return to social democracy in 2000, and following increasing lobbying from abroad, a new law was adopted, expanding the rights of the former expropriated owners while still offering some limited protection to renters. The now famous law no.10/2001[61] extended the restitution process to two new categories of people: non-citizens and those not inhabiting their former, expropriated buildings. Current renters were allowed to renew their leases for five more years from the moment of restitution, unless the owners were able to offer them a similar place to live and that they found acceptable. The rent was not to exceed 25% of the renter's household income.

The restitution, however, was not an automatic process. The former owners or their heirs had to provide extensive proof through documents and witnesses and file a fairly complicated request with the Local Council—the current owner of the property. In most cases, the Local Council would grant the request, although, in certain cases, it chose to fight it in courts.[62]

---

[61] "Legea nr.10 din 8 februarie 2001 privind regimul juridic al unor imobile preluate în mod abuziv în perioada 6 martie 1945 - 22 decembrie 1989," published in Monitorul Oficial nr. 75/14 februarie 2001

[62] One of those cases was Casa Vlad Dracul, the supposed birth place of Vlad Ţepeş and pointed out by tour guides as Dracula's home. It sits on one of the corners of Muzeului Square—the smaller square of the citadel—yellow and a bit lopsided, with the walls slightly leaning in from the larger base to the smaller upper two levels. Until the 1960s when it was nationalized, it belonged to the German Evangelical Parish, which used it as an old women's shelter. After the nationalization, the building remained vacant until the mid 1970s, when it underwent restoration and repairs, to be later transformed into a restaurant, the only one in the citadel until the late 1990s. As far as I know, even at the moment I am writing, the house is still in the ownership of the Local Council, rented out to a local businessman, also member of the council, and who continues to run the restaurant. Using law 10/2001, the local German Evangelical Parish requested to have the building returned, but the Local Council refused, so the matter was taken to the courts and all the way to the Romanian Supreme Court.

Dawidson (2005) observes that, nationally, this process was not uniform in its application, results, and the perceptions it generated. In the more center-right city of Timişoara, close to the Western border of the country, the general attitude of both the authorities and the general public was that private property rights should be restored and protected, and, as a result, there was a strong will to enforce the law and find additional paths to property restitution. About 80% of the housing was actually restituted through civil courts, and not as a direct application of the property restitution laws (which is what happened in Poland, where no restitution scheme and laws were put in place; see Blacksell & Born, 2002). The earlier law that allowed tenants to buy unclaimed property was seen as a hurdle and as connected to attempts of the former political elite to hold on to some of their power and material privileges. In contrast, in the northeastern city of Iaşi, with a political orientation that tied it to the center-left legacy of its political class, lack of documentation was seen as the main hurdle to restitution. The local administration (center-left) was not interested in finding or allowing alternative paths to restitution.

This was the case in Sighişoara, as well, as its administration and its elite, in general, was dominated by members and supporters of the main center-left party, PSD. Here, law 10/2001 freed up a significant number of houses in the citadel for the real estate market. When I came in, in 2004, most of the restitutions have been finalized, and plans were being made for repairs and modifications.

It was extremely hard to get accurate information on the status of the residential buildings in the citadel. The only somewhat reliable aggregate numbers that I had access to—after convoluted and insistent attempts—were the houses under state property in

mid-late 1990s[63]. Roughly, from mid 1990s on, half of the residential buildings were in the position to change hands as a result of the two laws that I mentioned.

Street name	State property	Total
Bastionului	5	12
Cojocarilor	9	13
Cositorarilor	5	10
Mănăstirii	2	7
Piața Cetății	5	11
Şcolii	9	17
Tâmplarilor	11	24
Zidul Cetății	7	10
Total	53	104
	50.96%	

Table 1: Residential buildings under state ownership (late 1990s). Source: ATT Sighişoara

After 1989, property restitution and privatization were important dimensions of the transformations the socialist half of the European continent was undergoing. Most of the attention, so far, has focused on land restitution, mostly because most of the western-published anthropological literature has, itself, focused on rural life and the organization of agriculture (due to the safety inherent in a declared focus on "folklore"). The studies

[63] It was quite a challenge accessing any reliable quantitative information about the restitutions in Sighişoara. I first tried, unsuccessfully, to obtain it through unofficial channels, then I filed an official request for access to public information, which was denied by the Local Council (the owners of the houses in the process of being returned to old owners or sold) on the grounds that they had no clear idea what the situation was, either. Finally, I reached the company that administered the housing "fund" and talk to two middle aged, overworked women, who printed out for me an incomplete list (but, as complete as it could be) with the houses. What was interesting was the sense of paranoia and fear that met every request that I made and every question that I asked.

on land use and land restitution that are worth mentioning are Katherine Verdery's work on the village of Aurel Vlaicu, Romania (1983; , 2003), Gerald Creed's work on the Bulgarian village of Zamfirovo (1998), and David Kideckel's study of collectivization in the Olt area of Romania (1993). Verdery is the only one who truly concerns herself with changes in property regimes; she approaches the study of property by centering it on power relations and struggles over disambiguating property rights. What I find useful is her conclusions is that the "evolution of a post-socialist property regime involves complex interactions between macro-systemic fields of force and the behaviors and interconnections of people caught up in them" (Verdery, 1998, p. 180). She offers a detailed account of how disambiguating individual ownership rights can both serve and disadvantage less powerful social actors, and that a more useful analysis of the process requires connecting those struggles both to the large social-economic context in which they take place and to their proliferating results (she uses a snowflake analogy to illustrate that).

My interest lies, though, in housing restitution, rather than just land:

Chelcea (2003), in an account uncomfortably (to me) sympathetic to the owners, examines residential property restitution in Bucharest. With my added caveat that he makes Bucharest to stand in for the rest of the country and is unconvinced of the existence of a real class system before World War II, Chelcea argues that "restitution should be regarded primarily as a genealogical practice, where the dispossessed kinship groups recreate relations with ancestors and recalibrate relations with living kin" (2003, p. 715). He focuses on the symbolic and emotional aspect of this process, which he finds akin to "ancestor worship," while minimizing the social and economic context in which the restitution is taking place, as well as the reality of the lives caught in the middle of the events.

Zerilli (2006) also takes sentiments and emotions at the heart of his analysis of property restitution in 1999 Bucharest. He sees them as "discursive performances that are acted out in particular social and political contexts" (p. 77) and ways to gain judicial legitimacy, for both former owners and current tenants. For tenants, the attachment to their *home* produces extreme emotional drama that, for some, literally resulted in "dying from eviction" (p. 74). Their struggle—through organizing and demonstrating in public squares—was to make their experiences and feelings public, and have their tenant rights recognized as human rights. The former owners chose to organize and convene in private meetings on the halls of the Bucharest University Law School in order to lobby—privately—with politicians and members of the government.

Both Chelcea and Zerilli conducted their research in one particular site—Bucharest—that, I argue, cannot stand in for the rest of the country, due to variations in pre World War II patterns of ownership, urban development situation, and the local social and political context of the restitution.

Ethnic patterns of pre-nationalization ownership should be addressed when discussing post-socialist restitution. Some of the restitution schemes were tailored to address this ethnic dimension, with differing results. Germans seems to be the one ethnic group most affected throughout Eastern Europe, possibly because of post-war events that involved massive expulsion, incarceration, and expropriation as retaliation for their war involvement. Public memory and official national discourse still imagines these developments as justified and not needing reparations. Where expropriation was ethnically motivated (as in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Baltic states), the problem of property restitution was severely complicated, and was—most of the times—successfully opposed. In Estonia, for example, Germans were indirectly excluded from the process, while Swedes were not (Dawidson, 2005). The most extreme example is the so-called

Sudeten Germans in the Czech Republic, victims of mass expulsion at the end of the war. The Czech state refused to accept defining these expulsions and expropriations in any terms other than as justified, and it also refused to participate in any negotiations, as the Sudeten Germans attached to the restitution requests other requests, as well, such as requests for return and regaining civil rights (Barkan, 2000)[64].

In Romania, the property restitution was not approached as addressing ethnic-based injustices, but it definitely had an ethnic dimension. In two other cities, Iaşi and Timişoara, property was returned to the pre-war, predominantly Jewish, German, and Hungarian elites (Dawidson, 2004, , 2005), but the process did not have an impact on local ethnic arrangements, since the number of restitutions was insignificant due to the size of the cities (over 300,000 inhabitants), and the property immediately changed hands through sales to tenants and other people. In the village studied by Katherine Verdery (2003), Germans were victims of expropriation following WWII, but were able to regain rights over their formerly owned land by working within the procedure of the law (producing documents, suing in civil court).

As this chapter (and dissertation) aims to show, the process of producing Sighişoara and its historical center into a heritage site greatly complicates our understanding of this process. In approaching the study of property restitution and changing property regimes in post-socialist regimes, I choose the place-specific route and I draw near questions that help me unpack the specificity of this process in the particular site where I worked.

---

[64] These expropriations were actually "acts of violence that contradicted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, notions or freedom, and protection of property." Sudeten Germans sued the government, but the "court responded that the radical measure of expelling the Germans must be viewed within their historical context and concurred with the decision to inflict collective punishment. The court chastised the Sudeten Germans for not showing more loyalty to the Czech Republic in 1938, for enlisting in the Nazi rule, and for at least passively enjoying the fruits of the occupation rather than participating in the resistance later." (Barkan, 2000, pp. 136-137)

While in the most of the country, law 10/2001 was, some could argue (not Chelcea, 2003, of course), about restoring a particular class hierarchy dismantled with the 1946 regime change, in Sighişoara it provided not only the legal and the procedural framework for buildings to re-enter private property, but also the conditions for unintentionally restoring pre-1945 local ethnic arrangements. I am not naïve enough to suggest that such ethnic hierarchies could be resurrected through a simple legal gesture; time cannot, indeed, be turned back, especially since most of the ethnic Germans have left in the meantime, and Romanians (from neighboring villages, but other parts of the country, as well) have moved in in great numbers. What I am arguing here, and in the rest of the dissertation for that matter, is that these hierarchies are reformulated today in ways that articulate productively and materially with present realities. By reiterating connections—familial, legal, symbolic—between particular buildings and places and German names, people, and stories, Germanness becomes, once again and in new ways, valued and important.

I am interested, of course, in the renewed material privilege that comes with being a (particular kind of) propertied German, but what I am more fascinated with is the productive force that such a legal move (or even just its possibility) has.

People traveled back from Germany or contacted friends, relatives, or lawyers in order to start the necessary legal procedures for reclaiming these houses, renewing or breaking old relationships. This process continued an earlier spur of involvement around the restitution of land in the German villages in the area (see Verdery, 2003 for a discussion of relevant de-collectivization and land restitution laws and their application in Romania). The returning German ethnics relied on the local political and formal social structures (the German Forum, churches, NGOs) and thus indirectly supported their existence, if only by justifying it. They didn't necessarily get involved—a local German

woman once complained to me that the German émigrés had no interest in accepting the current local reality. They fought to have their houses and land returned to them so that they could spend a month there, every summer, nostalgic about their childhood and youth, pretending nothing has changed. But, the local German associative life was anyway disproportionately active (in relation to the number of members of the community still remaining in Sighişoara) and heavily supported by the German government itself[65]. The result was that many local Germans had an impressive public presence: constantly being mentioned in the local press, organizing cultural events (with posters plastered all over the Old Town), being present in stories, gossips, and explanations, having their names recognized.

The possibility of property restitution made houses in the Old Town subject of constant talk and gossip. *Whose was it? Who used to live here? When? Are they dead? Where are they?* The recent history of each house would be pieced together, highlighting its German connections and mapping it onto the possibility of restitution to pre-WWII owners. Law 10/2001 became, in this small universe of the Sighişoara Old Town, not only about some material unfolding of individual justice, but also about reweaving a network of relationships between the physical landscape and a collective German referent[66]. People, names, memories would be included and excluded from the restitution stories depending on where they stood vis-à-vis this reborn public Germanness, in terms of familial belonging and public memory. This process, through its very reiteration, helped rebuild, in new ways, a living German presence that did not just

[65] Vedery (1983) argues that the cultural-associative life was, starting with the nineteenth century, the main way to provide the German population with a powerful public presence and a sense of community, in the context of the new Hungarian dominance and the exclusion of Germans from formal politics. This situation has established a significant tradition of cultural and civic associations in most communities in Transylvania.

[66] See (Verdery, 2003, p. 151) for the discussion on the differences between formal (institutional) and informal (local) knowledge about land ownership, and how institutional knowledge was generated outside the community.

hovered like some cultural specter over the Old Town, but permeated it both materially and socially.

Property and heritage

I don't think that property restitution in the Old Town of Sighişoara, and in particular in the citadel, can be untangled from the larger process of heritage (re)production at work here, in the same way heritage production cannot be explained only through a transparent public recognition of the older history of the place and the intervention of powerful foreign (German mostly) actors (see previous chapter). I see these two processes—of property restitution and heritage production—as having some synergic force, shot through with continuities in the social capital that a German name has held, to some degree, throughout the socialist period.

Reviewing the recent sociological literature on post-socialist privatization in Eastern Europe, Katherine Verdery observes that the process of privatization has been discussed as a way in which social and political capital was converted into economic capital, using (socialist born) cultural capital as a basis (Verdery, 2003, p. 10). When discussing land restitution in rural Transylvania and the privatization of the agricultural collective capital, she suggests the end result of the process—with former elites still controlling a great deal of the land and capital, or at least their distribution—is partly due to this transformation of social capital into economic capital (as former elites used their relationships and access to different networks of power to take advantage of privatizations and state contracts, for example), and partly to a particular response to globally-informed, contemporary capitalist processes (that placed these same elites at an advantage). I see these explanations as highlighting just one side of the more complex and messy dialectic at work. The case of Sighişoara and the privatization of the buildings

in the Old Town (via restitution or sale) make visible just how fragmented and muddled this process is, making social and economic capital intertwined, co-constitutive, and productive in their own right.

Germanness had some significant weight in Sighişoara even before 1989, and few would contest that. Property restitution (negotiated at a national level) was not ethnically motivated, but, in this area, did take on an ethnic meaning, transforming a loose German privilege (at the time connected to German intervention and to selective access to certain resources) into a concrete, material one. The fact that an entire section of the town began to be understood again, in concrete and present ways, as German, gave Germanness itself a renewed kind of weight, attached to it a re-assessed social value. Economic and social capital, generating and transformed back and forth into each other.

Heritage/heritage production was not only a mediator, catalyst, or accelerator of the process (whatever we might want to call it), it was an intrinsic part of it, a product and an ingredient, a public face and an inner logic. Most importantly of all, heritage offered—through tourism—a way for others to insert themselves into this process and claim participation and sometimes part of the (social or economic) profits.

What I call Germanness throughout this dissertation is, therefore, not a stable and unequivocal referent, but rather a creative space populated with interested as well as distracted interpretations that articulate well with various tourist imaginations. In between them, there are *German* and *medieval*, and I think of them as a detour into each other via an imagined European past of the citadel.

Medieval is what most locals would use, in Romanian, to refer to the various aesthetic choices made in renovating or decorating the businesses in the Upper Town, in particular the tourist business: exposed solid wood beams and heavy doors, wrought iron, intricate, hard to read writing, large, colorful flags and banners, and red geraniums on the

window sills. *Medieval* is, probably, the result of reading the difference presented in the built landscape of the citadel (in comparison to the surrounding Romania) as something less threatening than German, as something that could intersect Romanianness, as well. The interior decorations, in particular, often slip into a generic folkloric style, with handmade tablecloths and rough furniture that could be Romanian, Hungarian, or German. Most tourist businesses exude a half-serious hope to be read as German or just medieval, hope documented through the ads and signs for restaurants ('Sala Medievală,' The Medieval Room) or through brochures (with the word medieval mentioned more than once).

The 'authentic' look that one would expect to see policed in such a heritage site is rather slippery, somewhere in between a Disneyesque ideal and the reality of the possibilities on the ground. In one restaurant, the manager bought the wrought iron lamps from a store in Bucharest, because she couldn't find anything medieval enough in town or in nearby Tg. Mureş. In the restaurant across the street, the ceiling was painted in 'German' style, imitating what the manager was convinced had been there before. The painter, however, was a Romanian who made a living painting Orthodox churches, so the German medieval ceiling looked eerily similar to the Romanian churches in the area. I helped a couple of the employees choose the curtains in the same restaurant. They had been instructed by the manager—a German—to buy something that would look medieval. The reality of only two stores in town that carried curtains, and in particular the reality of the kind of merchandise they stocked (with the local clientele in mind) left us with some white, thin, plastic curtains, the most medieval of all we had seen in those two stores.

On this background of distracted interpretations, *German* is emerging, however, as a stronger and more *authentic* referent. The local newspaper (*Jurnalul Sighişoara*

Reporter) published a weekly blurb, presenting old buildings and their history, including the old address in German as well as their German names (if they had one). Some of the houses in the citadel, in particular tourist businesses, are now referred to by their German name, taken from prominent German families that used to live there. When one of the early hotels opened in the citadel, the new owner (a Dutchman) dug deep into the history museum archives and named the hotel after a family that used to live there: Wagner. One of the newer hotels took a curious hybrid name, *Casa Săsească*, the Romanian translation of Saxon House (*Sächsisches Haus* in German), as a subtle recognition of the German moral ownership of the place while still endorsing the hegemony of the national Romanian language.

Property restitution is one more step towards coloring the 'benign' *medieval* in a stronger German hue—not only highlighting the citadel's German history but also imagining its present and future as still connected directly to that history as well as a pan-European German identity. The new German owners or stakeholders seem more interested in uncovering and displaying (through names and plaques) the *exact* history of their houses while the Romanians and the Hungarians are still mostly invested in the house's age, often overestimating it. Some that I talked to gave me the century the house was built (which, after a summary checking, rarely matched historical documents), but never details about its distant social history—who built it, who lived there centuries ago, what they did, and so on. This was particularly true for those who were able to buy the house they lived in (helped by law 112/1995)—the age of the house and its German history meant for them a growing market value[67].

[67] Ghiță, whose family owned an apartment in an unclaimed house, would often point out how much he could ask for his share of the house (50,000 euros in the fall of 2004), immediately fantasizing about the house he would be able to buy with the money: not dark, not humid, and with a garden. His family (like the other two living in the building) was able to buy their apartment a few years back.

The public journey towards understanding the citadel as German will probably never be complete and, as of now, it definitely isn't smooth and uncontested. Some of the local Germans that I talked to (in particular the older ones) continue to be sad, despite the restitutions. They feel the restitutions have done nothing to restore the citadel to what it was or to offer it a dignified future—they are sad to see the citadel transformed into a giant hotel, and the houses sold to strangers who have no kind of local ties.

The evicted residents—Romanians and Hungarians—seemed just as sad and nostalgic, if a bit more resigned. The tentacles of a remote collective history of having no business being up in the German citadel, the half buried memory of a hierarchy in which they all had their places—now scrambled—made them accept the reality of the restitutions, more so than people in the same situation in other parts of the country (see Zerilli, 2006 for tenants organizing for their rights and attempting to alter legislation). The only claims they might make would be connected to the value they assigned to the labor of *living* in those places—but they only did it on the sly, as a sort of gossipy whining that expected no serious results.

Those who were able to stay—buying the unclaimed apartments they were renting from the state—are adapting under the multiple pressures of living in a heritage site that they increasingly can't afford financially, socially, and emotionally.

The following two examples explore these very dynamics, following the stories of two houses in the citadel.

LEAVING

One time, I overheard a conversation between two soon to be evicted residents. The house, an imposing two story building, a bit scorchy and decrepit but still maintaining some memory of its past importance, had been reclaimed by a relative of the

former owner and finally won in court. The loose link between the former owners and the person filing the claim, Mr. M., was tightened in courts through witness accounts about how he, although a distant relative, had taken care of them in their old age, and therefore was their rightful heir. Mr. M. had just sold the house to an Englishman working for the British Embassy in Bucharest, Mr. L., for 200,000 euros. The five years that protected the renters were soon to be up, so the residents were now confronted with the possibility of eviction.

The house was built in the seventeenth century, and renovated (with a simple neoclassic façade) early in the twentieth century (Machat, 2002). It had five rooms on the first floor and five on the second, a small basement and a spacious, tall attic, used by the remaining residents for drying laundry and storing larger items. The part that I liked most was the staircase, dark and kind of abrupt, with vaulted niches in the wall, left for candles or oil lamps. The staircase started out from the entrance hall on the first floor, and twisted up to an open, square hall on the second, with doors leading up to two other rooms, a walkway/balcony, and the attic (at the end of more stairs).

There were two families still living in the house, one on the first floor and the other on the second, squished only in two rooms each. A local NGO that I was intermittently working with was using the remaining three rooms on the second floor, two for offices and meetings, and one for a small library that they started in collaboration with the German Forum.

One summer day, I was in the "medieval" (as we called it) toilet on the second floor—which was what we all had to use when we worked at the NGO. The toilet was a kind of outhouse, at the end of a wooden walkway/balcony that extended, on the second floor, over the small and dark courtyard filled with rusted, abandoned objects and overgrown weeds. I could hear the conversation through the open windows of a small

apartment still inhabited by a couple in their fifties, János and Ágnes. They were discussing passionately the changes in the citadel, particularly the fact that a handful of people seemed to control everything, from the local administration to the local businesses. János expressed his disappointment at the current state of affairs in the citadel, with few of the residents left and no real grocery store to serve them.

There was a small store, opened at the edge of the Town Hall, in its very building. It sold some basics like bread, flour, and sugar, as well as snacks, sodas, and coffee for the Town Hall employees and all the citizens trying to solve some problem with the institution. But that was not the point. Both János and Ágnes felt abandoned and alone in a space that looked less and less like the home they were used to.

I only got to talk to Ágnes about this two weeks later, when I took her a potted plant for her birthday. She was by herself, just with her dog, Maci, a white medium sized poodle. I joked about the dog, how I always heard either Ágnes or János yelling at her in Hungarian, as it run down the stairs: "slowly, slowly!" and the dog never listened, jumping right into the street. "Yes, we tell her to go slowly, if not, she goes right outside, and with all the cars now, she can get hurt. It didn't use to be like this." She offered me a glass a sherry, which I accepted reluctantly. Several more followed. Like almost every woman I had talked to, she used to work in the textile industry and lost her job in the mid-nineties, when the local textile industry started its collapse. She later worked for a local shop, making and selling clothes, but the shop just went bankrupt not too long before, so she was unemployed, again. She made some money sewing clothes or making adjustments for various people she knew. We talked about the house situation, but she didn't seem to be all that upset, maybe just a little sad that she had to leave the house she had lived in for the past 47 years.

The new owner, Mr. L., was planning on restoring the part of the house where Ágnes and her husband lived now, in order to transform it into a vacation home for himself and his well traveled, Indonesian-born wife. In the summer of 2006, when this was happening, the five years required by the law were up, and the renters had to move out. Ágnes was going to move to her in laws' house, in a village nearby, probably as soon as the end of September. There was some melancholy in her stories about her life in the house, but she decided to think about it as a new beginning. She told me all the plans she had for transforming her new house, the new flooring, the new kitchen furniture. She pointed to several new and blue objects spread through her current kitchen. "I just bought these in Mediaş" (a nearby, slightly larger town), "and everything is going to be color coordinated, all blue and yellow." I asked her how she felt about leaving the house behind. She didn't answer. Instead, she got up from her chair in the tight, improvised kitchen, walked towards the narrow hall at the entrance into her apartment, and started telling me about her first night there. She was very young, and they had just moved here from a town in the Northwest, after her father was reassigned to a new job in Sighişoara. She arrived with her mother on the train, and an old woman, a relative, picked them up from the train station and brought them here.

> We walked in the dark, and I had no idea where we were going. I remember a long street, the exact same way you walk now from the train station, crossed the river and walked the stairs up in the citadel, behind the Catholic Church. If you walk the same way, in the dark, it feels like nothing has changed. We spent the night sleeping on the floor, right here, covered with a coat.

She pointed towards the narrow entry hall, "We had no furniture, the furniture came later, with my dad, on the train."

Moving to her new house gave her a new sense of normalcy. "There, we will have a real kitchen, and everything. Look how we have been living," she sighed, retuning to her chair. Like most of the still inhabited houses that I visited in the citadel,

hers exuded a feeling of improvisation, of some kind of spatial making do, as this apartment (like all the others) was born out of an arbitrary division of a large, one-family house. Ágnes's apartment had a tiny vestibule (with the entrance door opening right into the wooden walkway), a tight kitchen, and two rooms on the other side of the house (with windows into the street). The furniture and various things were piled up, accumulated just like geological layers, and punctuated by Ágnes's work: a sewing machine, pieces of cloth, and clothes in various stages of making. The walls behind, modestly painted, sported dried stains from leaks in the roof or occasional humid spots climbing up from the foundation. No matter how hard I tried to get her to speak about Mr. M., who won the house in court, or even Mr. L., the new owner, Ágnes kept avoiding expressing any direct opinions. For her, moving out of the improvised space into a "real" house meant, in a way, putting an end to an improvised life in a place made inhabitable until then only by a social life that had been peeling away for the past few years. "We're the only ones left here," she repeated to me. "And, I'm not the kind of person who likes to go outside and gossip, like others. I mind my own business. But, when you come home on the street and don't recognize any faces, except for Vilma néni[68]'s…" She finished the sentence with just a sigh. "At least we know a lot of people in Albeşti" (the village she was moving to).

Three of the rooms on the second floor were now rented out to an NGO, and two on the first floor were used by Cristina, a divorced Phys. Ed. teacher, living by herself and occasionally visited by her son, who now lived in Germany. She was approaching retirement and was planning on moving to either Bucharest (where she had lived for most

[68] Vilma néni was an older lady who lived two houses up the street and was able to buy the small apartment she lived in. She told me she would never move—the only thing keeping her alive was visiting her husband's grave in the Evangelical cemetery on the top of the citadel hill. Vilma néni spend her afternoons in the door, looking over the street, scanning it for familiar faces which she would talk to for a minute or two.

of her adult life) or Braşov, a city a couple of hundred kilometers to the south. She did not waste any occasion to tell me how much she hated Sighişoara. She moved here a few years back, returning to her home town after her parents had passed away, since life was cheaper, and she could stay in her parents' apartment while renting out the one she owned in Bucharest. Our conversations—no matter how petty—would turn into long venting sessions for her about how mean and cold people are in Sighişoara, how they would only pursue their own interests at the expense of everybody else.

Illustration 10: The house where Cristina, János, and Ágnes used to live.

She said she was not upset about the house: it wasn't her house after all. She didn't grow up there (her parents moved in after she had left for school, more than thirty years ago), so she had no emotional attachment to the place, or so she tried to convince me. Besides, the new owner said he would allow her to stay for a low rent another year, until she retires and moves out of town. He didn't need that side of the house yet, and he would rather have someone heat it up during winter and air it out. What she was bitter

about was Mr. M., the man who was able to claim the house in the name of the old, now deceased, owners, to whom he said he was related. Cristina *knew* it was all a scam, that Mr. M. paid people in the Town Hall, in the justice system, and on the street, and obtained the house through false statements and paid witnesses. She told me she *knew*—from credible sources she could not divulge to me—that Mr. M. had admitted to the bribes and said that it was all worth it in the end, since he made 200,000 euros off the house. She was particularly upset that he was able to obtain the house with absolutely no merit, "he didn't do anything in this house, and nothing for those poor old people. He stated in court that he took care of them when they were old, but people told me that he hadn't even set foot there. " What she seemed most upset about was not necessarily that Mr. M. hadn't taken care of his old relatives, but that he had no connection to the house—that there hadn't been any investment, emotional, financial, social, or any other kind before the moment of restitution.

Illustration 11: Cristina tending her "mini-garden" on the street, right under her windows (2005).

Cristina understood that fighting the restitution was a lost battle from the very beginning, but when she found out that the house had sold for 200,000 euros, she felt that a part of that, no matter how small, was rightfully hers. Once, she took me through the house to show me all the improvements her parents had done there in their almost thirty years of residence. They changed the electric system, replaced all the plumbing, cleaned up the degrading, humid, and crumbling walls, all on their own expense and on their own time. The administrator of the house during the socialist years (the so called "Housing Fund," *Fondul Locativ*) was supposed to take care of all needed repairs, but since it was severely backlogged and underfunded, it informally agreed to any work residents could do themselves. The improvements, expenses, and labor, although part of the houses now, were not officially reflected in any documents. Cristina was upset about that, as she believed the owner was able to get such a good price because her parents had taken good care of the house and even improved it.

Illustration 12: The street in 2007, after the Town Hall started changing some of the underground plumbing. The remaining residents in the area were afraid that the former park across the street would be transformed into parking.

Cristina was echoing Katherine Verdery's peasants—they believed could make ownership claims over the flour mill that they built and worked in as they believed they had their labor congealed in it (Verdery, 2003). Just like them, she was convinced that her parents' work on the house, the years they lived inside it and kept it inhabited, warm, aired, and alive, entitled them to some rights over it. Both Zerilli (2006) and Chelcea (2003) mention that the tenants' claims for rights over the houses they considered their homes were, in the same way, connected to the labor and money they had invested in them over the course of their residence there.

Cristina approached Mr. M., trying to convince him to compensate her for her parents' contribution. Mr. M. refused, saying that being able to live in a nationalized house on subsidized rent was a favor that he and his family had given her parents. He felt no obligation towards her or any of the renters. Besides, it was too late—all rights and obligations had been transferred to the new owner. Cristina could not see her parents' life in the house and their use of it as a favor, but as some kind of labor, leading to particular rights. She contacted a lawyer, and in the same time tried to talk to the new owner, Mr. L., and work out some deal, at times pushing me or others NGO workers into intermediating negotiations for her. Mr. L. had already agreed to allow her to stay another year, until she retired, but her new request was not, as far as I know, successful.

The new owner, Mr. L., first came to see the house in 2006, in the beginning of the summer. He saw all the interiors, met the residents, including some of the NGO members who happened to be there. After he bought it, he kept coming back to the rooms taken up by the NGO, spending time with whoever happened to be there.

The NGO had moved in during the fall of 2004: Mr. M. was a friend of some of the people involved with the organization, so he decided to rent it to them until he figured out exactly what he wanted to do with the house. The rent, 600,000 old lei (about 20

euros), was nothing compared to rents for similar spaces in the citadel or downtown (from 100 euros up), and the place was cleaned up and newly renovated.

Illustration 13: One of the NGO rooms

On his visits to the NGO, Mr. L. seemed happy and excited about its existence. The open space of the NGO was a contrast to the crowded apartments where Ágnes and Cristina lived. The walls were painted white, with light blue accents, and were decorated with artistic photographs, part of a traveling exhibition about a mountain village on the brink of destruction. There was little furniture—just a large wooden table and some wide chairs in the larger room, and a desk, a smaller table and a small L-shaped couch in the other. The interior was speckled with small antique objects, heads of garlic, apples, and medicinal plants, all tastefully arranged, as if the visitor happened to walk in,

unexpectedly, on somebody having a hearty rustic lunch. This aesthetic, a smoothed over local tradition, was purposefully cultivated by the most active member of the NGO, a local German in his thirties, who spent a lot of time there. He seemed very much invested in promoting a local image that contrasted with the reality of the poor and somewhat historically retarded Romania around; as he pointed out to me, Sighişoara was a "cosmopolitan provincial town," and he welcomed and entertained all somewhat progressive and intellectually curious foreign tourists who happened to pass by the building's door.

Illustration 14: An exhibition organized by the NGO.

Whenever Mr. L was around, the place happened to be swarming with foreigners, coming in and out, and wondering aloud, in their various languages, about how wonderful this place is, and the great (environmental) work the NGO was doing.

Needless to say, Mr. L. was enchanted by this air of cosmopolitanism and openness. He congratulated the Saxon and proposed that the organization stay, for no rent, indefinitely or at least until he figured out exactly what he wanted to do with that part of the house. On one of his visits, he felt so elated that he went on a shopping spree around the citadel and bought a painted wooden chest from an antiques store, for five times the price he would have paid if he had only asked around first. After that summer, his visits became rarer and rarer, and in the summer of 2007 rumors were going around about him trying to sell the house.

I felt embarrassed and torn being associated with the hip NGO and having to face Ágnes, János, and Cristina, extending to them my guilty friendship. Transient and unattached, I was relating to the house as my hobby, pretty much in the same way Mr. L and the NGO volunteers were. I was, in a way, the very face of gentrification, cosmopolitan and presentable, cleaned-up just like the NGO rooms Mr. L got so excited about. What I—and others moving in or taking over the newly evicted or sold spaces—was bringing in was definitely not the labor of living that former residents had infused their houses with, but other kinds of professionalized or commodified labor or, as the case was with most tourist establishments, the sweet displaced labor of leisure.

The face of gentrification was the new paint and the new repairs being done left and right—the cleaned-up appearances that made Ágnes reconsider her life and her home and see them as improvised and unreal. It wasn't hard for her to see herself out of place in her home of 47 years. She was sad to leave, but looking forward to moving to a "proper" house—just as proper for her as the citadel looked now for tourist, investors, and tourist workers.

I am in awe, even now, at the force that a piece of legislation—decided hundreds of kilometers away by people that never met Ágnes or Cristina—and desires stirred up by

increasingly attaching a German/medieval/Saxon identity to the citadel can have to change lives, move people and furniture, and remove entire realities out of this space.

STAYING

I first met Lia on a slow January afternoon, when she came into the office I was working in, replacing Linda, to ask me to send a fax for her. We had some working office equipment, and I was used to dealing with distraught, desperate citizens, sent by Town Hall employees to have photocopies made or documents typed up. She talked the entire time, passionately and fast, her blond hair coming out of her ponytail, and her voice, high-pitched and insistent. I couldn't quite understand what she was saying through the unfinished sentences and the distraction of flinging arms and sheets of paper. The next few times I talked to her in the office and on the street didn't go much better and left me just as confused and tired. It took several weeks of accidental meetings in the street, purposeful visits and asking around, to finally get to her story.

Lia was having problems with her house. She owned one of the four apartments in an old house in the main square of the citadel. Initially built in the fifteenth century as a modest two room house, it was transformed in the seventeenth/eighteenth century by adding three more rooms, and later, a second floor and a tall, spacious attic (Machat, 2002). The current division into four different apartments was a mid twentieth century improvisation, still invisible from the outside: the house still stands tall and wide, uninterrupted, looking like everything I would expect from a Central European bourgeois house. What made it belong to the citadel was its imprecise, pre-industrial feel. Despite some of the neoclassic modifications to the façade (probably done early in the twentieth century), the house kept the look of the older houses in the Upper Town: absolutely no right angles or parallel lines, sloping vertical contours, thick walls (143 centimeters at the

base) narrowing in towards the roof, and a feel of heaviness. Later in the spring, I got to visit all the rooms in the house, and interiors exuded the same feel of improvisation and unevenness.

The neighboring house, narrower and even more crooked than Lia's, belonged to a newly transplanted businessman, Mr. F, who came to Sighişoara from a larger town in the west of the country. Mr. F. had bought, the gossipy mouths of the citadel whispered, another four houses in the Upper Town, and planned, the same mouths insisted, on preparing them for tourist use. This narrow, crooked house was dark and pressed between two other houses, not very suitable for the hotel and bar Mr. F. was planning on opening there. Still, he proceeded with transforming the house, starting with its shallow basement, said to have been built on top of an old well. The basement looked nothing like the six deeper stone cellars in the citadel already transformed in bars and restaurants. It didn't have tall vaulted ceilings, and stone pavement, and it definitely didn't have the feel that—for a lack of better name—the enterprising locals called 'medieval' in their promotional brochures. Mr. F.'s basement was paved with dirt and barely high enough to fit a standing person. One summer, he hired workers to deepen the basement by excavating loads of dirt from under the heavy, five hundred year old house, defying not only basic construction principles, but also the elementary laws of physics. Soon, the walls started shifting, and the house sweetly leaned for support onto Lia's house. Over the next year or so, deep cracks appeared in the walls of both neighboring houses, all walls shifted some more, and windows and doors were stubbornly stuck open, driving Lia insane.

Lia had just repaired her house a few years back, spending quite a lot of money, and even more time and effort since the house had been declared (like the rest of the citadel and most of the Lower Town) a national historical monument. All work and in

particular all modifications had to be approved by the National Commission for Historical Monuments, following long and complicated procedures that involved experts traveling from Bucharest and examining and documenting the repairs. Lia would have liked to change more inside the house and update it closer to a twenty-first century dwelling, but she had to console herself with the certainty that she was abiding by the law and preserving the historical and financial value of the house. The feeble wooden windows were restored and not replaced with the coveted *termopane* (special insulating windows) and all walls were kept in place, even if they had no structural importance.

But, now, her newly renovated walls (her apartment was on the first floor, next to Mr. F.'s house) were cut through with long horizontal cracks. The windows leading into the square were stuck ajar, forcing the family of four to sleep in two improvised beds in the remaining room, and leave the large cold room unheated, uninhabited, and—according to Lia's constant and disgusted complains—full of mold. Mr. F. didn't think the cracking was in any way related to his own construction work, and he suggested to Lia that, maybe, the house was in a bad shape before and she was now trying to take advantage of him and the situation in order to have repairs done on her house. "I have pictures," Lia told me, "I have pictures of how my walls looked like after I renovated, right before I plastered them, and they weren't cracked at all. So they shouldn't tell me that they were cracked like that, because the walls started cracking after they took all that dirt out of their house."

She was upset, constantly complaining, telling her saga to whoever had the chance of entering a conversation with her. The double burden of owning an old house that was also a historical monument was now made heavier by the damage caused by her new neighbor, and also by her lack of social capital. Having no significant connection to the administrative apparatus, she had to meekly follow the law and flow of required

procedures when she did her repairs; she had nobody to close their eyes and not report her if she did repairs without the proper approval.

Illustration 15: Lia's house (orange, in the middle). The house that caused the damage is the one to left (red), and the one just transformed into a bed and breakfast is the one to its right (blue). Picture taken during the medieval festival.

Mr. F. apparently did have that kind of social and political capital. I was able to find out little about his exact connections to the Town Hall, the Local Council, and the political elite of the town, but there was definitely a positive relationship operating between his economic capital (and the promise of a strong future local presence) and the limits of what was possible for him locally.

Lia asked around, and the information that Mr. F. had few of the necessary authorizations soon surfaced. With the determination and discipline of an ant, she assembled all the proof and documentation she could gather and threatened Mr. F. to sue, if he did not offer her the money to fix the damage caused to her house. Mr. F. nonchalantly refused, so Lia started the process by filing official complains to the county office for constructions (*Inspectoratul Judeţean în Construcţii Mureş*). Representatives of that office came, documented the damages to Lia's house as well as the lack of any authorization on the part of Mr. F.. They issued a cease and desist order for him, and also sent a report to the Sighişoara Town Hall, remarking on the considerable damage done to Lia's house. The report did not explicitly connect Mr. F.'s unauthorized work to Lia's cracks in the wall, but it was the first official recognition of the fact that the damage to her house was real and recent, and it was the first victory of any kind for Lia: the work on the neighboring house was, for now, halted.

Lia's happiness didn't last long. She (and the other three families living in the house) received letters from the Town Hall, informing them of the damage noted in the official report and of the Town Hall's responsible decision to declare the house unfit for living and a danger to passersby. The letter didn't mean that they could not live there anymore, it was just a way for the Town Hall to pass responsibility to the owners of the house: they were to be liable for any injury or damages caused by their crumbling house, and therefore they should mark the area around the house with warnings. Lia was, again, outraged. She had no copy of the county office report, and she called in to ask for one. They told her that her request should be in writing (a fax would be acceptable), and this is how I met her, disheveled, in my downstairs office.

It was the middle of winter, and the cold coming through the windows stuck open, the mold growing on the furniture, and the deepening cracks made Lia decide to go ahead

with the lawsuit. She was hoping to muster the support of everybody living in the house—paying the lawyers and all the necessary expert reports was not going to be cheap. But, the other residents were already scared by the Town Hall letter and by the prospect of long and ugly legal fights that they knew they had no resources for. The following six months turned into a miserable, nervous bickering, avoidance, and self-pitying discussions. There were accusations flinging from Lia to the other residents and back, that they were afraid their own illegal work on the house might be discovered, that they are cowards, or crazy, or clueless, that Lia was herself crazy and that she started all this and now they were all going to have problems. There were also quiet, supportive discussions, and the hope that they might work something out together. Zsuzsi, living upstairs from Lia, was probably the one that gave Lia most hope and, in the same time, most trouble. Towards the end of the spring, she seemed to have joined the crusade, or at least she talked about it as if she had.

Lia needed somebody to draw an accurate plan of the house in order to hire the structure expert for the lawsuit. I asked my dad to help and the two of us spent the day measuring her house. As expected, there were no right angles or parallel walls in the entire house: it was built organically and without any plans, probably by the owner, as most of the houses in the citadel were. We entered every apartment and I got to chat with all the residents. It was a nice sunny day, so they all came outside, curiously following me and my dad through the house. Lia, in particular, would "supervise" the measuring, taking mental notes of the illegal transformations that the various residents might have made to the house. The woman living on the first floor, in the apartment next to Lia's, transformed part of the hall into a bathroom, cutting out an arch that probably had some structural importance. The floor of the kitchen in the apartment right above it was slightly sunk, but the old man living there seemed a little defeated about it, as if it was an

act of nature. Lia, on the other hand, made sure that we noticed and whispered, whenever she was sure nobody would listen: "did you see that? That's why they don't want that expert study, because they've done all this illegal work and they're afraid they would get caught." Still, all the neighbors seemed happy that something was being done about the house problem, if a little concerned as to how much this is going to cost them.

The segmented property of the house made it harder for Lia and the other residents to negotiate their rights in the context of the transformations this side of the citadel was undergoing. One of the residents, on older man living by himself, signed an agreement with Mr. F., although he could not remember exactly what he had agreed to. The other residents had finally decided that they could not afford to pay for the expert study that would definitely link the damage to their house to the construction work on the neighboring house, so Lia found herself on her own.

Caught between property as a source of value and a source of liability (Verdery, 2004), Lia decided to go ahead with the lawsuit and worked hard to save money for the lawyer and the mounting phone bills, making macramé tablecloths that she sold in the main square, and sometimes working as a vendor at one of the souvenir tables. She told me she felt she had no choice—she knew how much the house was worth, and she knew how much she had invested in it, and she was going to make sure the house would keep its value.

Just like Cristina, Lia felt that her improvements of the house, and her very dwelling in it entitled her to special rights over the house—and to a public recognition of them. She was upset that her new neighbor, Mr. F., had never actually lived in the house, and that he just bought it, hired some people to fix it, and would use it as a business. Lia bought her house in the mid-nineteen-nineties, soon after moving in at the insistence of her husband. They could have moved into one of the new apartment buildings in the new

part of the town, but Lia's husband really wanted to live in a house, since he grew up in one, and this was the best they could get. She hated it right from the beginning. "What kind of house is this, it doesn't have a yard, nothing. It is dark, full of mold, and the doors won't close," she told her husband when they first looked at it. In 1994, they renovated the house, built an indoor bathroom, and tried to get rid of some of the mold. "You should have seen what was here when we moved in, some gypsies lived here. It was so dirty, full of garbage everywhere, they kept their horse inside the house. We took out eleven carriage loads, we gathered everything and threw it all away. We left nothing." She told me this story as we were touring her small apartment, with her pointing out the improvements and the newly born cracks, and walking me through the many years her family had lived there and the fortune they had spent heating up the place.

It was hard for Lia to see how she had been herself part of a wave of gentrification, displacing other less fortunate residents. She didn't necessarily notice how her taken for granted privilege—being a Romanian or at least a non-Romani—had just lost most of its currency. What Lia noticed was the weight of a process that connected the local administrative apparatus, the local elites, newly arrived capital, and dislodged real estate in the citadel—until recently as heavy and immobile as the buildings themselves—and moved them into a slippery market that made everybody insecure and suspicious. Most houses were changing hands, sold, reclaimed, bought by renters, owned by someone and almost sold to somebody else. Rumors and stories replaced direct questions and observations. I tried to identify the other houses owned by Mr. F. in the citadel, by asking residents, and more than once I was shown a building that I knew for sure belonged to somebody else. It wasn't hard, then, to slip into conspiracy theories, which Lia convincingly did: "You'll see that after he's going to destroy my house

completely, that I don't have any money to fix it, he'll come to buy it for nothing, but I won't give up, I won't give up…"

At least in Lia's case, the conspiracy theory wasn't entirely unfounded. She was convinced that important decision makers in the local administration were directly involved in her drama. Mr. F. was supposed to apply for a special construction authorization with the Town Hall—which he didn't do—and the Town Hall was supposed to act on any suspicion that illegal construction work was done, send an inspector, and fine the culprit. None of these had happened, so Lia decided to sue the Town Hall, as well. The Town Hall responded to her accusations with a letter stating that they had no knowledge of any construction work being done on her neighbor's house, which might seem like a valid excuse, except that the back of the offending house, and the gate to its small courtyard were literally across the street from the Town Hall building. Later in the year, when Lia, her upstairs neighbor Zsuzsi and two other women were having one of their late-afternoon discussions in the street, they opened up again the conversation about Mr. F., excitedly provoking each other to more stories. "Zsuzsi has pictures," Lia said, "with all the dirt they took out of the house, they left it in the street until they came, loaded it and took it away. And those from the Town Hall are saying they saw nothing, come on, give me a break, they couldn't have not seen it, they walked right by it every morning." They most likely did. More than that, somebody had probably lost a valuable parking spot, for months, due to the mound of excavated dirt.

There was another way Lia felt the force of the ongoing transformations in the citadel. Over the more than two years I have known her, her presence in the public space of the citadel has dwindled to the point that I could only see her if I knocked on her door. She didn't let her two children play freely in the square or in the street anymore, and the long gossipy sit-down sessions with the other women had become a thing of the past.

When I met her early in 2005, she only complained about the medieval festival—the last week in July—when she would keep her children indoors to protect them from the crowds and their immoral habits. For the rest of the time, she seemed uninhibited by the loads of strangers touristing the streets outside her home.

In 2007, it felt like she didn't even care anymore. She told me that she was tired and it was time to focus on something else. She took a settlement from her neighbor that would allow her to fix her house—in exchange for her permission to continue the construction work—and she decided to spend more time in her husband's former village, working with a British NGO on repairing the local fortified church.

Just like her house, Lia felt squashed and pressed by the changes in the citadel. Although she was able to hold on to her home—since there was no return to a previous, German owner—the pressures of the transformations taking place in the citadel were weighting on her options, narrowing them into the situation that she now finds herself in: owning a house that, really, she can't own. The building is now sandwiched between two tourist establishments which are constantly worked on, and its owners and residents don't have the capital to match those transformations and maintain their house healthy and valuable. The new tourist economy seems to be engulfing even the private spaces of people's homes, making windows to be stuck open and forcing a family of four to sleep in one room. In the same time, since Lia's house is quite large, and its ownership divided among four different families, it is unlikely that it will get sold very easily. Similar houses in the citadel are still awaiting an investor willing to satisfy all the owners of the building.

CONCLUSION

I told the stories of the two houses as a way to explore the material and emotional force of an economy built around transforming—materially and symbolically—residential spaces into German heritage. Nationally relevant changes in the legislation allowed many buildings in the citadel and the Lower Town to enter a real estate market that already had prices inflated by the Dracula Park hype, a few years back, and by an increased interest in rescuing selected buildings with a German history. In Sighişoara, the laws also addressed an ethnic pattern of ownership, which conveniently laid on top of an interest in using the German identity as a developmental resource.

Heritage production in Sighişoara is not about a simple and transparent reversion to an ethnic order that placed Germans at the absolute top: the final owners of these houses are not German, rather, they are most likely to be either out of town, enterprising Romanians or foreigners. The local German Parish owns only a few important buildings in the old town which I expect not to be sold for tourist development, although the parish had already rented some of them for tourist use.

At the same time, as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) put it, heritage is a value added industry. Through the process of making their German history visible and publicly intelligible, buildings become invested with symbolic and financial value, setting in motion processes that do not have to be necessarily about ethnicity, but about a relationship to and a position within the market. In this context, the desires that become connected to them are infused with valuing the buildings more than anything as German, and often trump feelings of attachment to home.

Ágnes now sees differently the place that she has considered home for 47 years. The familiarity, the tolerance of inhabiting the space, day, after, day, populating it with personal objects and the small events of life, are slowly giving way to a sense of

incompleteness and improvisation. The apartment slowly reveals itself as inadequate to be a home, feeding fantasies of how life is going to be in a different place. There is no room for nostalgia—just for new, transformed expectations of a domestic life in sync with the expanding, consumer-oriented order.

Lia's house becomes a project that needs to keep up with the neighbors' transformations, and to the transformations of the citadel in general. It is not about bringing the apartment into the twenty-first century, for a twenty-century life, but about constantly guessing, interpreting, and responding to what the better situated others are doing.

They both became acutely—if quietly—aware that, in some ways, they were guests in this historical space, that their entitlements were sliced along the lines of heritage and historical inheritance.

The changes in property regimes, as neat as they may be on legal paper, refract into these developments that are, ultimately, about fitting life in between the more restricting lines of tourism, heritage, and property entitlements. I chose to look at gentrification in the Sighişoara citadel through these lenses, searching for it at the intersection of all the changes irradiating simultaneously through the expansion of capitalism, national changes in property regimes, and local, still influential, historical ethnic arrangements.

Chapter 3: Public Space

A SMALL DETOUR ON DOING RESEARCH

I should try to take apart the threads of my excitement, that first day I spent in Sighişoara doing fieldwork.

You see, being home, after six years spent mostly in the US, was a gift to myself, my parents, and my friends back home. Fifteen months, spent continuously within 60 kilometers of the place where I grew up, from the people that I love most and that I miss, even now, writing these words. Allowing myself to be myself, smart and funny, in Romanian, with my sweet ardelean accent that means absolutely nothing here in the US, with all the gossip and incessant talking, with all the little things of the everyday, with brushing against people on the street, and walking everywhere, and staring at the dust gathered on the tip of the shoes, at the end of each day. Now, grown up, I could see how life could have been, suspending myself from my life as a student in a seemingly endless graduate career. I could live home, finally.

The promise of the everyday life, outside of a tourist frame, was also tempting my nostalgia. I had memories of many summers spent here during the medieval festival, drinking late into the night, and talking to strangers. I was excited about transcending the limits of that encounter with the citadel—I would not be touristing, or partying; I would just be here, at home.

But, there was something else that excited me, the barely conscious recognition of something, of another kind promise that this space seemed to be making. I had lived, after all, almost six years in the States, and my absence from home—as intermittent and fixated on the promise of return as it was—had still been populated by desires and sensibilities of a world of commodities and consumption. I have lived in the 'afară,' the

'outside,' after twenty-two years turned towards the West, yearningly, waiting for the yearly package from my mom's best friend in West Germany, or pirating Western European satellite TV stations. Now, I was uncritically recognizing something working on this space, promises that other spaces—a mall in Austin, the fake old town in San Diego, the main square in Santa Fe—have made to me in these last six years: promises of a safe, and perfect little market, exuding a sense of history or community. Capitalist desires as well as a yearning for an authentic original, trained and structured by the experience of myriad simulacra, were making their way into my recognition. It was more than one nostalgia, there were many, orienting my encounter and seeping out through this indefinite excitement. "It's almost like Santa Fe," I wrote to my advisor, without being able to explain what I meant.

This chapter is in a way about the analytical value of allowing myself to inhabit these sensibilities and write and theorize from there. It is about comfortably navigating through the fields of interpretation, attending to the fluidity of connections between processes, conditions, and social actors, rather than to totalizing explanations. I see my changing nostalgias, and excitements, and angers not only as catalysts for entering into these meaningful fields, but also as feeding and sustaining my engagement with them. They hold my attention long enough to allow for exploration and they ground and lend courage to my writing.

I had set out to write about capitalism, attempting to find ways to talk about it and understand its workings, in particular those related to the transformations of public spaces in Sighişoara. My venting as theorizing significantly detoured my analysis and I ended up feeling that I couldn't talk about capitalism without explicitly linking it to gendered arrangements of power, consumption, leisure and labor. Rather than being a central

object of my project, tourism and tourist development became more of a mode of articulating all these, above-mentioned, issues.

I wrote—out of intellectual laziness, some might say—from the inside of this troubled space of intersecting subjectivities and unashamed, self-serving affective curiosity. My self-reflexive theorizing and writing allowed me access to truths that I can be at peace with and I can ally myself with comfortably. I was, in a way, settling for soft, weak authority, centered on my experience, my self-awareness, as well as a disciplinary-wide, shared paranoia about the limits and politics of representation.

But, I ask, what kind of anthropology is this? What kind of ethnography is this? How far is it from something that, as Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, and Cohen aptly put it, "seems devoid of the capacity to empower anyone but the writer and the reader for whom it serves as academic collateral or therapy" (Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, & Cohen, 1989)? In trying to resolve the ethical issues that have historically plagued the ethnographic process, how far is self-reflexive writing (mine, in this particular case) from, simply put, impressionistic, self-absorbed travel writing? How much redemptive weight can I put on my own bitter-sweet affective engagement with my own home, on my conviction that my partial truths, truths that emerge out of particular situations, are truths that matter?

The only solid (but not unproblematic) ground from where I can ultimately speak is my feminist politics, which articulate, partially and often on an affective level, with the lived experiences of the many women I worked with in Sighişoara. My politics (in their abstract but mostly in their lived incarnations) helped me see how my allegiance to my beloved home can split along lines that can both privilege the women's experience and be grounded in my problematic, colonizing presence. Few of the women I worked with would recognize themselves in any account of my feminist politics, and this makes me suspicious (as it should make anyone) of the possibility for a feminist ethnography, or

activist anthropology for that matter. This doesn't mean that the possibility does not exist—we should be all making room for it by recognizing the limits of trying to represent other people's experiences, and by striving instead to provide something closer to a modest and sincere testimony.

BACK

The focus of this chapter is localized transformations of the public, as they relate to public space and to public ways of being. Central to my discussion are labor and leisure as disciplining practices that mediate people's relationships to public spaces, to capitalism's expansion, as well as local hierarchies and politics. The public space of the citadel, and in particular that of the main square (Piața Cetății), is an intense site for the disciplining of human existence into particular arrangements that privilege paid labor, leisure organized around consumption, as well as gendered and classed boundaries between them. Public space also becomes, in this case, a mediating and accommodating field for the articulation between the local economy and local politics, as well as between the neo-liberal state and the expanding market.

I built the first part of the chapter around the continued weight of male sociality and its ability to warp space: somehow, power flows to and settles with it. I see male sociality as channeling capitalist expansion through preparing and using public spaces for particular kinds of leisured consumption, and I also see it as a privileged site for decision-making and the formation of consequential political subjectivities and alliances. In that, I follow Doreen Massey (1994) in her insistence that space and place matter in the construction of gender relations, and that gender has always been implicated in geographical constructions of space and place, on a variety of scales (she gives the

example of uneven development, organization and reorganization of the national economic space in Great Britain, in particular).

The possibilities of the public are sorted and channeled, filling up the space of the main square in the citadel and recreating it as a total tourist site, to be consumed and to consume in. Yet, local life is not annihilated or kept out: it coexists, along narrower grids of possibility, all accommodating and accommodated by the capital's material and ideological expansion. The second part of the chapter deals with what is being squeezed out—disruptions of an unintelligible and unappealing female sociality, domestic labor, and unordered space. Continuities with past possibilities of the public that imagine the public as available to everybody compete with continuities of public socialities as male and in this process open spaces for these disruptions.

In the third part, I look at what is let back in—feminized paid labor—and in particular at how well the boundaries between labor and leisure, apparently so fluid and porous in the first part, are actually constantly policed and enforced.

A SMALL DETOUR ON THEORY

Before I proceed with the analysis, I would like to briefly lay the theoretical ground for my approach to the relationship between space, social relations, and the relentless expansion of capitalism.

One influential starting point for thinking about the public space in Sighişoara has been Henri Lefebvre's work on the social production of space and his conclusion that "social relations of production have a social existence to the extent that they have a spatial existence; they project themselves into a space, becoming inscribed there, and in the process producing that space itself" (1991, p. 129). In other words, the expansion of capitalism and its reorganization of social relations not only find expression in the

transformations of the space, but also work through it. I chose the public space of the citadel as an example for this chapter precisely because of the intensity and the visibility of the transformations that it is undergoing, and of the dramatic ways in which space and social relations rely on each other for existence and change.

In that sense, the message of this chapter is a hopeful and trustful return to the *local* and the *grounded* even in the study of global processes, of processes that are transcending boundaries and that are seemingly refusing to be physically bound or fixed. To the fears and suggestions about the loss of territoriality set forth, for example, by Appadurai (1996), I oppose analytical solutions illustrated by Setha Low (2000) in her study of two plazas transformed by Costa Rica's participation in a global economy, by Steven Gregory (2007) in his account of how the lives of people in the Dominican Republic have been affected by processes associated with globalization, and by Aihwa Ong's (1999) approach to understanding how transnational subjects are still invested in and work through territorial, yet flexible, understandings of citizenship. I rely on Doreen Massey's encouraging and useful way of conceptualizing the relationship between space and place as being produced through each other, as social relations, and through the articulation of larger flows and forces:

> But the particular mix of social relations which are thus part of what defines the uniqueness of any place is by no means all included within that place itself. Importantly, it includes relations which stretch beyond—the global as part of what constitutes the local, the outside as part of the inside . . . And the particularity of any place is, in these terms, constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through counter-position to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part) through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections to that "beyond." Places viewed this way are open and porous. (Massey, 1994, p. 5)

This chapter is, then, about how capitalist expansion works through and on the space of the citadel, and how this space is, in renewed and (for me) disturbing ways, "determined economically by capital, dominated socially by the bourgeoisie, and ruled

politically by the state" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 227). I therefore pay close attention to the intersection of capital, processes of class formation (and the political subjectivities they articulate with), and the workings of a state struggling with fitting in a new political order and a differently globalized economy. I see the privatization and social reorganization of public space as central to and necessary for these processes.

How can a space that was engendered by and enabled the social existence of a face-to-face neighborly community be transformed into a tourist space, to be visited, to be occupied through consumption, to signify a 'destination'?

The social and political labor of the triad mentioned above focuses, I argue, on producing the citadel square (which is the space that I will mostly refer to throughout this chapter) as an abstract space, a space doubly reduced to a Euclidian space signified through two dimensional representations (Lefebvre, 1991): plans in which the citadel is measured and marked in square meters that are objectively owned by the city, objectively worth X amount of money, and transparently rented out to corporate entities. Abstract spaces rely for their existence on transparency, homogeneity, and order. That doesn't mean that they are, really, any of those things. "Abstract space is not homogenous . . . it simply has homogeneity as its goal, its orientation, its 'lens'"(p. 287). For space to become abstract, it has to be emptied of people, bodies, meanings, rendered through the pretense of transparency by concealing the actual relations of production on which its transformation relies. Abstract space has to be transformed into an image, to be read, to be seen, to be understood in that way:

> People look, and take sight, take seeing, for life itself. We build on the basis of papers and plans. We buy on the basis of images. Sight and seeing, which in the Western tradition once epitomized intelligibility, have turned into a trap: the means whereby, in social space, diversity may be simulated and a travesty of enlightenment and intelligibility ensconced under the sign of transparency. (pp. 75-76)

I apologize if I have given you the impression of clean, predictable, and successful lines along which 'power' works on/through spaces (the citadel square, in my case). Such an approach has, however, the advantage of making visible how threateningly large forces like 'capital,' 'state,' the 'dominant class' become visible and recognizable for people like me and articulate—intelligibly—with concrete situations. I find it useful here to bring up Foucault's theoretical intervention in showing how power, space, and knowledge articulate in the concrete disciplining of human bodies and their everyday existence (Foucault, 1995)—in this chapter's case, of particular kinds of labor, leisure, and public ways of being.

To return, in reverence, to Lefebvre, these disciplining tactics work partly through prescriptions, and especially through prohibitions, through signaling the boundaries of what is possible, allowed, rational:

> Thus space indeed 'speaks'—but it does not tell all. Above all, it prohibits. Its mode of existence, its practical 'reality' (including its form) differs radically from the reality (or being-there) of something written, such as a book. Space is at once result and cause, product and producer; it is also a *stake*, the locus of projects and actions deployed as part of specific strategies, and hence also the object of *wagers* on the future—wagers which are articulated, if never completely. (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 142-143)

In a privatized public space like the citadel square, what is shaped, molded, transformed, is not just consciousness and meanings, but human practice—as space has no meaning or existence outside practice. I use, therefore, Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977, see page 214), the embodied dispositions evoked and realized through movement through space, as a way to bridge the structural processes that I invoked earlier with the ethnographic reality. Throughout the chapter, I pay attention to what people do, to the kinds of spaces they create and encounter through sitting and drinking, gossiping and working, meeting the market's expectations or zigzagging, dizzily, through the streets. I pay attention to both the spatial strategies of "power" and to people's

"tactics" (Certeau, 2002), to order, disorder, and the practiced refusal to understand either.

MALE SOCIALITIES

When I first saw the main square as my "field," it felt full and alive. And with every day I spent there, crossing it on my way to work, to home, or to the people that I was working with, it felt fuller and more alive. I began recognizing faces, the same people sitting down for a drink on the square *terase*, the same people leaning against the doors, the same people working there, just like me. I felt privileged in a way, becoming part of this full, almost perfect world, the back stage of a miniature tourist burg. This is really how I felt the first month or so I was there.

The same week I arrived back from the States to my home town, Tg. Mureş, I took my first scouting trip to Sighişoara. A lot had changed in the past years. When I was growing up, there were two buses a day going to Sighişoara, a mere 55 km away, and it was always more convenient to harass friends or relatives to give you a ride than figure out public transportation. It wasn't that Sighişoara was out of the way, it was actually Tg. Mureş, the county seat, that seemed to be stuck in the middle of nowhere. I took one of the many commuter minibuses going back and forth between Tg. Mureş and Sighişoara, thinking that this would be routine for the fifteen months to come, one bus in the morning and one in the evening. I had no funding for my research, but I had parents and their retirement income: I could just stay at my parents' and commute for my fieldwork. But, I thought, I also had labor. There had to be something for me there. A good friend of mine had given me the phone number of a woman working for an NGO, which I will call the Center, and which also owned a hostel and a restaurant right in the

citadel. I called her up the day before to ask about a job and she had been very nice, yet very evasive. But, I wasn't discouraged. I would go and talk to her in person.

Illustration 16: A street in the citadel.

When I got to Sighişoara it was still morning. I walked up to the citadel, taking the main way from downtown, the way tourists go. It was, really, the most inefficient way, and I knew about some of the back roads, but my uncertain sense of orientation and the need for a familiar starting point made me stick to that route: through the former main gates of the citadel, under the covered walkway, then under the Clock Tower. Up, on the slippery medieval cobble stones (which I learned later were actually a nineteenth century improvement), then the open space of the Piaţa Muzeului (the museum square). It was still early. I kept walking, past the souvenir shops just opening. The promise of a sunny

day was shining on the still cold cobblestones, and the shopkeepers were sweeping the dusty sidewalks, or rather moving the dust from left to right, and from right to left, without any hurry. It was all so *quaint*! I didn't know the word at the time, but I learned it soon, after talking to foreign tourists and foreigners living in Sighişoara. "I like the town because it is so quaint." "The villages are quaint." It's amazing how nostalgia can make people stuck on one word and completely limit their imagination.

I easily found the Center, on one of the streets sticking out from the citadel square (Piața Cetății), went in and talked to the lady, Linda, who turned out to be the secretary. She was just as evasive in person, and politely indicated to me that I should talk to the boss. He should be at work soon, and she said a German sounding name, which I forgot on the spot. I went back into the street, Strada Bastionului, and up the slight slope into the square.

Right on the corner, between the square and the street, sat Casa Wagner, a hotel and restaurant managed by Vera and Rareş, two former high school mates and good friends of mine. The business was owned by a Dutchman, married to Vera's sister, and Vera and Rareş had moved to Sighişoara a few years back, after spending eight years in the capital. They both wanted, just like me, to be closer to home.

Rareş was right in the door, smiling. "What are you doing here?" he shouted at me, adding the ardelean "tu" at the end, as an invitation for bantering and joking. Vera came out, too, and we chatted excitedly. She showed me the hotel and the second building they (well, the Dutch owner) bought and transformed into a hotel. "The travel agencies would not talk to us unless we could fit one large bus of tourists in our rooms, so we had to get it." I can't wait to tell my mom about this, I thought to myself, giggling happily that I could contribute something to the jovial bickering between my parents. My dad, who had worked for a little while on the first of the houses, and another friend of his,

also an architect, used to laugh at the Dutch and his crazy hotel ideas. "Who is crazy enough to want to come and stay in a cold, unsafe, and moldy hotel, in the middle of nowhere?" They were convinced that this will never work, ever, and the Dutchman will never get back the 50,000 euros he paid for the building and the 50 000 he had to invest in it. Well, dad, they just bought another one.

I told Rareş about my job plans, and asked him for advice. Vera joined in. I didn't want to ask them for a job, that would have been awkward. I told them about the Center: Rareş laughed and Vera just grimaced, saying in all seriousness: Martin, the NGO's boss, "is more Romanian than Romanians." At that time, I didn't know quite what that meant, but I took it as a warning. She tried to convince me to work for another NGO in the citadel, run by an American woman. It seemed to be doing some missionary work, which honestly scared me a little, but seemed like a more professional place to work. I started considering it, and right then, Rareş pulled me away, saying, "I see Martin, let me introduce you to him." He was sitting at one of the massive (and hideous, in Vera's opinion) wooden tables in the square, drinking. It wasn't even lunch time. He seemed nice and very interested in my advertising degree. It was my turn to be evasive, having my mind set on investigating the other NGO, so I told him that I needed to do something really quickly and that I would come back to him later in the day. I tried to talk to the American woman, but she was out of the country, so I was soon back to the German, who was no longer sitting and drinking in the square. As it turned out, he was sitting and drinking somewhere else. I walked the twenty-five or so meters back to the Center, entered the courtyard, and there he was, drinking at a similarly massive wooden table. The courtyard was filled with tables and benches, some occupied by tourists, eating idly. I started talking to Martin, and another man joined in. He was introduced to me as the Artistic Director of the NGO, also former folk music star. He was heavier,

about 55, and drinking as well, not beer, but a clear liquid, in a short and wide glass. I assumed it was vodka, and the next fifteen months proved me right. After five minutes, I was hired. I was going to work with the Artistic Director on the ethnic cultures festival, which was less than three months away. After the festival, they would see if they needed me anymore.

I didn't think much of their sitting and drinking at the time. If anything, it brought some excitement, some bohemian flavor to the place. Everybody seemed to be sitting and drinking, either in the Piața Cetății patios or on the more private patios or courtyards in the back. I sat down with Rareş and Vera for a coffee that first day. And I continued to sit and have teas and coffees, beer and wine, with various other people. As the time went by, my sitting and drinking became rarer. I was at work early, checking in with Linda, who had become one of my closest friends, and laboring away as the day went by. I would rush through the citadel, coordinating with people working for hotels, restaurants, the museum. The work wasn't strenuous or oppressive in any way. I would go up the street, then cross the main square and walk up to wherever I needed to be. I learnt people's names, and they learnt mine. It was easier to walk and talk face to face than try to figure out the same thing over the phone. I would cheat some time out for myself and chat with the people I met on the way, because I would almost always meet someone I knew. And if I didn't, I would just stop by the Center's *terasa* in the square, pull up a chair next to whoever was working there, sometimes helping them serve, and we would gossip away for a few minutes.

This is what I was so excited about my first few months there: the fullness of this social space, its constant reiteration through the bodies that moved and met all the time, and recognized each other in the streets and in the square, through the thick talk and satisfying gossip. Soon I realized how small a place this is, and how everybody, despite

the occasional quarrels and enmities, had to rely on each other: borrowing from the other restaurant kitchen tools and ingredients when they run out, renting rooms from the next door hotel in order to accommodate larger groups. Even the personnel "changed hands" several times.

The space felt to me full, and smooth, and homogeneous, and inclusive, in a way, a utopia where boundaries between work and leisure, labor and consumption, and even professional and personal seemed somewhat fluid and irrelevant.

Martin and Ghiță, the Artistic Director, would mainly sit and talk and drink, sometimes coming late and staying late into the night, with friends and artists. It was hard for me to tell when they were on the job and when not, if they were paying for their drinks, getting them on the house or charging them to their mounting accounts. Rumors had it that Ghiță's debt to the Center was so large that he would not get paid anything at the end of the month. This muddiness didn't surprise me, as I had grown up with the same overlaps and confusions in understandings of property, and power, and rights of use (Gal, 2002). And everybody else had too, apparently. Few, if any, would challenge Martin's right to use any of the Center's resources for his own personal ends, as he pleased. This was, probably, some of what Vera referred to when she characterized him as 'Romanian.'

It didn't bother me that much for the first couple of weeks. I soon became some kind of glorified secretary able to write well and translate quickly and give efficient solutions to various problems, but having absolutely no executive power. I had to get higher approval for every little thing. I would go and check with Martin, but I soon learnt that he couldn't be bothered with any details and would refer me to Ghiță, and this was terribly inconvenient. The world outside Sighişoara, and actually outside the citadel, started business at eight or nine in the morning and was not interested in waiting for

Ghiță to wake up and walk to work from his dark and humid house across the street, two doors down from the Center. He would eventually show up around eleven, and sit out on the patio, smoking, and sweating profusely, waiting for noon, when the place could start serving hard liquor. Right after noon, he would start drinking, and soon other men would start appearing from nowhere and drink with him.

One week into my job, I decided to take matters into my own hands and I wrote without higher consultation my first document, a media partnership agreement. I printed it out and took it downstairs for him, in the courtyard, to read over and approve. He was sitting outside, drinking. I approached the table and addressed him, holding the paper up, an invitation for him to look. He didn't even acknowledge my presence. I got closer to him—which I didn't really want to do, with all his sweating and panting—and meekly spoke into his ear, "Can you please read this?" He turned towards me, "not now, can't you see I'm busy?" I was completely frozen and I just couldn't move. He was sitting, with friends, in the middle of the day, talking politics or who knows what, too busy to do his own work that he was getting paid for. All I felt was frustrated, steaming anger. I left the printout on the table, next to his vodka glass, and I went upstairs, into my office, to calm down. But, the anger stayed there, smoldering, and I can feel it even now, rereading my notes and reminiscing about those moments. It took me weeks and long commiserating talks with other women to start pulling out the threads in my anger and see, in good old feminist fashion, the political in the personal. That experience got repeated, over and over, in many other ways, with the same sense of exclusion, and less worth. And that experience wasn't mine only.

I obviously hadn't entered this particular plane of interpretation without baggage. I had witnessed in my own working class neighborhood in Tg. Mureş, for the past fifteen years, all the drinking establishments—which we called *crâşme*—sprouting and thriving,

when many other businesses failed. Just within two blocks of my apartment building there were seven of them. The pubs, mere holes in the wall, would always be full with working men, particularly in the evening. They were vital spaces of male sociality, conveniently harboring men away from their home chores, and wives, and children. My emotions vis-à-vis men's public drinking had, therefore, long roots in the many years I intimately witnessed, in my neighbors' families, violence and exploitation as always connected not only to men's alcohol abuse, but also to men's defying public and time-consuming drinking. I was, in all honesty, prone to feel irritated by the mere sight of men drinking and socializing[69].

In Sighişoara, all the sitting and drinking pointed for me to the fact that the current spatial, economic, and political transformations were incredibly accommodating to particular gender arrangements. Male sociality, time consuming and relying heavily on public consumption of alcohol or just public consumption, was central in many ways to the transformation of the citadel, and the citadel square in particular, into a tourist space, to be consumed and to consume in. Over the past four years, the square had been almost completely covered with *terase* (patios) and vendor stands.

Drinking seemed to be about taking time away from all kinds of labor, paid or domestic. Martin and Ghiță were sitting and drinking, and I have seen Rareş and his friends drinking in the square, during the day but especially in the evening, while I knew his wife, Vera, was at home alone with their young son.

---

[69] It would be gratuitous, maybe, to rant about the deep-seeded misogyny in Romania which has survived despite the socialist promises for gender equality and equivalence. The socialist state had mostly left the family alone (and memories of the family as "the basic cell of society" are still pounding in my head, residues from my first fourteen years of life, and textbooks, newspapers, and the TV). And men have left women to do their "job" at home and have retreated into public spaces, drinking and talking. Many people in Romania have become more ambivalent about drinking, recognizing it as indexing some kind of problem, but unwilling to clearly relate it to structural, gendered inequalities. Between two jokes about men beating up wives that deserve it, people would admit that domestic violence, for instance, exists because abused, the alcohol "takes your mind," especially for the poor.

But this didn't mean that all men working there would drink, especially when it came to working hours. Nea' András and nea' Dorel (two handymen hired by the Center) had, unsurprisingly, a drinking habit, as well. They would arrive, punctually, at 7 AM every day to do their work. I would bump into them downstairs in the bar, where they would often purchase a *déci*, the Hungarian short for 100 ml, of the cheap cumin liquor *Rachiu Secuiesc*. Sometimes, they would bring their own alcohol. They would diligently go in the other downstairs, where the central water heater was, sit quietly for an hour or so, sipping their liquor. Despite my growing aversion for men's drinking, I almost found that endearing. When I went home to Tg. Mureş, my parents would always want to hear more stories about the two, and couldn't get enough of András and Dorel's disappearing and drinking act. But, this act didn't last that long. As soon as Martin figured out what they were doing, midway through the fall, he made them come in at 8—since they were starting to work at 8 anyway—and ordered them not to drink while on the job.

Another NGO that I worked with as a volunteer was Vita. Work might be too pretentious a term. We would actually meet and talk every week, Tuesday afternoons and late into the evenings. The people in the organization, mostly men, were very concerned with high moral standards, which ranged confusingly from progressive politics to very conservative Christian views. They didn't like Martin, and his drinking, and any extensive public drinking. They didn't like the local administration and all the big and small corruption they felt everybody was involved with. One Tuesday in February, we decided to hold our weekly meeting at Veritas's café. Veritas, the missionary organization that I almost worked for, also opened a café on the bottom floor of a building they owned in the main citadel square, serving no alcohol, but rather pricy coffee and locally made, American recipe-ed sweets. We had teas and cookies and talked for about two hours about the past, present, and future of Sighişoara, as usual. I imagine

that if it had been summer, we would have sat on Veritas's square terasa, a few meters away from the other, alcohol-serving, establishments.

It occurred to me, then, that this tea drinking (and with Vita, the meetings every Tuesday) is just like drinking alcohol, touching elbows with Martin, and Ghiță, and all the other men. It wasn't all about alcohol, or drinking, it was about being able to take this time to sit and do absolutely nothing, away from home, or anything that might qualify as domestic. It was a space that I had access to because I was young, and single, and financially independent, and doing research. (The other woman that attended regularly was also young, single, and financially independent, and would be the meeting's "secretary," taking notes.) Male sociality, alcohol or no alcohol, was pleating well with the commercialization of these spaces.

About three months into my "tenure" at the Center, a new character entered the scene: Marga, who later also became a really good friend of mine. A southern transplant to Sighişoara, she was a Sociology doctoral student looking for some interesting work in this small town where she got stuck marrying her local husband. Marga was bold, articulate, and self-assured. And, boy, she knew how to drink. I was working at the time with a graphic designer on a brochure for the organization and for its hostel, playing the same frustrating "take it to Ghiță for approval" game. We thought we were done, and I excitedly brought the final printed proofs downstairs, slightly cut off at the bottom by the printer's settings. Marga, who was about to be hired by the Center, was in the courtyard, drinking vodka shots and smoking with Ghiță and Martin. She gave fairly bold and uncensored advice on the brochure, joining Ghiță in taking apart the whole thing: this is not poetic enough, this is too poetic, I don't like the pictures, oh, and there is no bottom part. I felt like I was going to lose my mind seeing my work of days of thinking and writing being unthoughtfully trampled on between sips of vodka and distracted bits of

loud conversation. I remember thinking later that this whole fieldwork thing might turn me into an alcoholic, if I ever wanted to have full access to those decision spaces. Marga was in the end hired and put to work, just like the other nice women in the organization. And, once she got pregnant, her gender transgressing days were over.

This drinking/consumption space was not only gendered and classed. (I am using, for now, "classed" as a space holder for a more complicated, and much needed discussion on class formation and reproduction in Eastern Europe, in Romania, and in this region in particular.) This space was also about decision making and particular arrangements of power, and, more importantly, about shaping politics, and particular kinds of access to the public sphere.

As small and sometimes inconsequential as it is, XX still participates in the local politics, and its members are inserting themselves, and their issues, in the local political scene. Their feminized participation—both as an NGO/feminized politics and tea-sippers/cookie-eaters—was balanced out by their ability to leisure in this space as well as by their assertion that they are *doing*, nevertheless, politics. They were timidly shaping themselves into political actors, into people that matter, and thinking of them I am reminded that doing politics is a practical issue, it takes time, and only those who are able to take time for themselves are able to participate in it.

The citadel square was literally a space where politics happened and connected to the local economy. The Center patio, the Casa Wagner and the Casa cu Cerb patios (all in the main square), as well as the semi-public ones in the courtyards of Hotel Sighişoara and Casa Wagner, would often be frequented by local business owners and managers, in particular the tourist ones. They all seemed to be friends, and would spend long hours talking and drinking, discussing national politics, and sports, and local politics and business. One of the two tourist associations in town, and the most powerful, was made

up of people that I would often see sitting together, even late into the evening. Several of the members were also elected Local Councilmen (literally men), and controlling much of the tourist business in town. In the monthly Local Council meetings, the same council people will raise the issue of concessions over public space in the citadel, discuss it, propose solutions, and vote them, with little opposition. From all the meetings I attended, I suspect it was a tacit, quid pro quo kind of game. They will have their own issues resolved, and then they will vote favorably on the others'.

In the spring of 2005, though, something interesting happened. Casa Cu Cerb's request to rent the space by its building in the main square was denied, although gently pushed by one of the German Forum's representatives. The manager of the hotel, Mr. H., speaks German fluently and works closely with the German political organization, the German Forum. The space he asked for was the same the hotel had been renting for several years, but the renewal request was denied, apparently, due to revised fire code regulations. The patio would be in the way of a fire truck coming through, they said. The same week I ran into Dr. O, who ran a hospital in a village nearby and was also involved in local politics and with XX. Now, Dr. O, as well as Mr. H., was not participating in any of the socializing that I described above. Yet, we still sat down at a table in the restaurant (and we could have stayed on the Casa cu Cerb patio, as I have seen both do so many other times). We talked for a while, and then Dr. O asked Mr. H. what he will do about the patio, since everybody else seemed to have had their request approved, except for his. Mr. H. waved his hand. He was not worried. One of the council men assured him that his request would get approved in a couple of weeks, when the waters calm down and everybody would forget about this. And, sure enough, Mr. H. got his approval and was able to open his patio.

The same year, the Local Council decided to reorganize the souvenir vendors in the citadel: the wooden stands would sit in two parallel rows, on one side of the square, and each vendor would need to apply for a special authorization to sell there. As for the local painters, who had been selling paintings of the citadel for more than ten years right by the Clock Tower, they were to be moved by the citadel wall, in a remote residential area. Both painters and residents were appalled. I was walking home one afternoon, and I stopped to talk to one of the art sellers, Zsuzsi. She has been selling her husband's art in a prime location, over by the stairs of the German Forum building, opposite from the Clock Tower and the museum. "They don't like us to be here," she said, referring to the German Forum. "I talked to them, and they promised they would talk to the Local Council about letting us stay here, but now they are being fishy and are avoiding the subject." She was upset that the painters received no political support and that they would very likely have to move. I suggested that maybe the Town Hall and the Local Council people might be more receptive if they had something to gain from this. She raised her voice, irritated: "But, we gave them, we gave them drawings, and paintings, and everything."

After months of negotiations, threats, and preferential interventions, the painters were finally able to stay in the same square, spread on one of its sides, though away from the German Forum.

For both the local administration and the local economic elite, the public space of the citadel was a space where they could articulate with each others' workings. The main square, in particular, was transformed by a new capitalist aesthetic that saw the space as empty and unused, rendering the existing social life invisible and, ultimately, nonexistent. The space was transformed into a commercial space, measured and priced in the Local Council meetings, coveted and rented out to whoever seemed to be better connected to

the administrative elite. The state was not taking its hand out of the market, but rather taking a more sophisticated grip. Local politics were partly drawn out of the state domain and played out into that of the market; friendships and working relationships between local politicians, businessmen, city employees were physically played out through this space, through the male socializing as well as the transactions of the bits of the square. The space became an economic resource, for the local administration, for local (tourist-oriented) businesses, and, most importantly, for particular individuals who created, fostered, and tactically used their relationships with and connected all these separate spheres. We can look at these individuals, city workers, local political figures, as mobile, fluid, and willful points of articulation.

Through these informal political practices, often referred to as "corruption," or the "mafia," the public space of the citadel was able to mediate and articulate two seemingly separate social fields, that of the state and the market. These articulations are often unsettling, in particular for outside observers, and Katherine Verdery (1996) and Nancy Ries (2002) suggest that in Eastern Europe "mafia" and "corruption" are tropes for understanding and working through the uncertainties of transition, when the oppressive, yet visible hand of the state is apparently replaced by the invisible hand of the market. In Russia, these informal practices as well as the associated informal expertise and navigational skills are central to understanding the functioning of current market institutions as well as the continuities with and changes from the socialist period (Ledeneva, 2006).

The Sighişoara locals would refer to these relationships and the people involved in them with resentment, but also with a kind of resigned matter-of-factness. They certainly participate in the same kind of relations whenever they have the chance or the need. Everybody knows somebody working in the right place who would speed some

procedure up or would help with some authorization papers. All see themselves as benefiting from this system, and the fact that some have more to benefit is often silenced away with some gossip and a shrug of shoulders. It is not that people are stupid political herds, inept at understanding or challenging the system. From my discussions with various people in town, it is apparent that they are all aware of how everything relates, and even how local politics relate to national politics, in ways that make them even harder to control. They also sometimes attribute the origins of the current arrangements to the involvement of certain people with the former secret police. It is not hard to see all the flexible connections between people, institutions, businesses. It is just that political agency, the way we imagine it, kind of loses its way navigating through the needs of everyday life and those of maintaining useful relationships.

I partly attribute this tactical popular assent and inertia to a continuity with the socialist period and a still usable set of practices and knowledges about how to access and work within state institutions and hierarchies. These knowledges are now enriched and complicated with the somber understanding that the new market economy and its elites matter. The political and economic elites converge and articulate with each other in moves that contradictorily reinforce the state's involvement in the "free market" economy and try to limit it. The line of convergence in Romania has been, at least for the past fifteen years, that of extracting resources from the public/state domain, mainly though privatization, state contracts, and also through policies that favor certain economic actors, as in the case of our citadel square.

The transformations in the public space are thus central to the citadel's gentrification. Tourism, and heritage tourism in particular, seems to be an immediate and efficient way in which these processes find conditions for expression.

Economically, tourism relies on cheap labor, high margins and turnover for merchandise (in our case for beer and sodas), and a value that only rarely gets reflected in the "production" costs, that of the tourist site. In the case of Sighişoara, of course, it is probably too early for the high property costs to be reflected in the services prices, as most hotel and restaurant owners have paid meager prices for their establishments. The value that I am actually referring to is not a thing that exists and gets extracted, it is rather something of a thick and magnetic aura, promised, fulfilled, and disciplined partly through the various tourist activities (connected, eventually, to selling Sighişoara as a certain kind of tourist destination and through producing it as German, Romanian, Eastern-European, European heritage). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett referred to heritage production as a value-added industry, and this is exactly what it is (1998, pp. 150-152).

Next, instead of paying attention to what is produced, I want to draw your attention to what gets displaced, replaced, drained out. In this chapter, I am focusing on the transformations that these spaces—public and thus vulnerable—have to suffer in the process of producing, accessing, and extracting this aural value. First of all they become attractive to power: the local administration, the businesses, the local elites, take over these spaces, physically and ideologically, so much that the residents' presence becomes awkward and out of place. There is also very little room for imagining this place as anything else, or imagining anything else, literally, in this space.

All developments, transformations, and even the more punctual kind of events point to similar interpretations of the space as something that needs to be filled up and used, economically. Martin has been trying for a while to obtain "funding" to work on the little park by the Catholic Church, at the end of Strada Bastionului, the Center's street. The tiny park (a grassy open space with some benches and swings) is used by

locals to sit and gossip, and by children from the citadel and even from the Lower Town to play. Martin hopes to build more swings and a wooden deck/castle for the children, as well as a deck to serve beer for the parents, "so they'll have something to do while watching over their kids." Veritas, the missionary organization that I almost worked for, has tried to organize community events in the open space of the citadel, supported by local churches (generally other than the Romanian Orthodox Church) and several NGOs. The events (a community day in May, a crafts fair, Saint Nicholas's fair, a pre-Christmas candle walk) have minor participation, unrepresentative of the town as a whole. Even in their oppositional intent, they too insisted on filling the space with something, as if physically and socially empty. In spite of some of their problematic conservative politics, I admired their hopes of countering the Dracula and 'medieval' obsessed tourist developments, but I was always frustrated to see that they couldn't stand the space to just be.

Two other events, the medieval festival and the ProEtnica festival, would fill up the citadel to its brims, and shamelessly infuse many of its spaces. The medieval festival in July, in particular, drove all the residents crazy. Many go away for a week or just lock themselves indoors, with their children, and watch the spectacle safely from the windows or their doors.

DISRUPTIONS

I am sorry even now I didn't have a camera to capture this moment. It was Saturday, during the medieval festival, the last weekend in July 2005. Strada Şcolii, the street that goes up from Piața Cetății to the covered staircase, was full with vendors' stands lined up on both of its sides, and with people, in casual clothes, roaming from one stand to the other, and up and down the street. It was still early in the day, meaning that

more tourists were to come. As I was coming down, I saw Johannes, a German pastor, lanky and serious, in his usual dark, sober attire, slowly coming up the hill and walking his bike. He had some groceries from the market in his bike basket, and was trying to make his way home, through all the people. He stopped for a moment to rest, and this is the moment that I wish I had captured. His presence, week after week unnoticed and quite normal, suddenly became absurd and awkward—his bike too big and unwieldy, disturbing traffic, with a basket full of greens and vegetables, in a market full of touristy mementos. Johannes is awkward anyway, most of the time, tall, standing straight, and always proper, but that Saturday his awkwardness spoke about the increasing awkwardness of fitting daily life into the citadel.

There is one Romanian fairytale, about a young prince who goes away, gains immortal life and comes back just to see his home country completely changed, with everything and everybody he has known dead or gone. Looking at Johannes, in that moment, I felt the same surge of sadness and nostalgia.

Of course, there are many kinds of nostalgia. The one that I felt at that time was of the frozen, dead kind. I wanted the citadel, and in particular the main square, to never change. I wanted the main square to stay as it was, empty, crooked, with its dusty cobblestones, equally slanted sixteenth and seventeenth century buildings, and the two large trees, in opposite corners, surrounded by brown wooden benches. That's the square that I knew, and it was hard to make room for anything else in my brain.

The nostalgia that most residents evoke when talking about the space of the citadel is a more living kind of nostalgia. It works everyday on the space, shaping it and then fading away in the lived present. Still, this nostalgia also models it as no longer open, available, and safe. One sunny May afternoon, in 2005, I was sitting on one of the benches, under a large, half dead linden tree, with five other women. Two of them lived

in houses right in the square, and the other three a couple of streets over. "Things have changed so much since we were little, there was nothing here, and there were so many children. We would go out and play hide and seek and *elastic*[70]. There was enough room to run and play with the ball. It was full of children and the parents wouldn't be afraid to let us outside to play by ourselves."

I thought of a day in the winter, the first Friday in January to be more exact, when I came to work early in the morning. There were no tourists, since the New Year's Eve wave was over, and the school was not yet in session. I saw Felix, the stray cat I've been feeding, across the square, and I called up to him, he ran towards me, and I crossed the square, diagonally, with the cat rubbing on and weaving through my legs. It was just the two of us. When I reached the other corner of the square, I stopped and looked back. There was nothing else there, just me, the cat, and a thin, precarious layer of snow with our footprints. I experienced the place as private, and safe, and intimate, as if my own, in a way. I thought of all the strange people and things that will fill it in the summer, and how I will probably never be able to walk it, just like that. I felt that loss painfully. That was the first time I experienced the public space of the citadel as a particular kind of public, as something that I am mildly entitled to (since I walk it every day, I work there) and also something occupied by familiar and even more entitled things and people.

"Were there many children?" I asked. "Yes, here, at Veritas there were Mari and Laci living downstairs, and Ildiko and Csilla upstairs, here at Casa cu Cerb and here (gesturing to the house on the corner, next to the linden tree) Radu, Ianci, and Rebeca. At Hotel Sighişoara there was a boys' dorm." Kinga was reminiscing nostalgically, helped by the other women. "Now it's no longer like that. There were no cars back then, no cars would get up into the citadel. I don't know, what are they doing?" she said, turning

[70] A game popular with girls—it consists in competitive jumping routines over an elastic string.

towards us. "They promised they would put a new barrier at the citadel entrance, one with electronic cards." I looked around, and out of a total of twelve houses around the main square, only four were still inhabited (with two actually operating souvenir stores on their first floors). "We used to walk to school together," continued Marina, "and in the winter, we would sled down from Haltrich, from the top of the hill, all the way down to the main square." She gestured towards Strada Şcolii, the same way Johannes had been trying to go up. "You can't do that now, you can't even let your children play outside. There are cars everywhere, and all these *terase*. You can't even walk across the citadel square anymore, you have to go around all those things." I know what she meant. In the morning, during the school year, the odds of getting hit by a car dropping children to school were pretty high, and during the tourist season, it seemed like there were cars parked or trying to park everywhere.

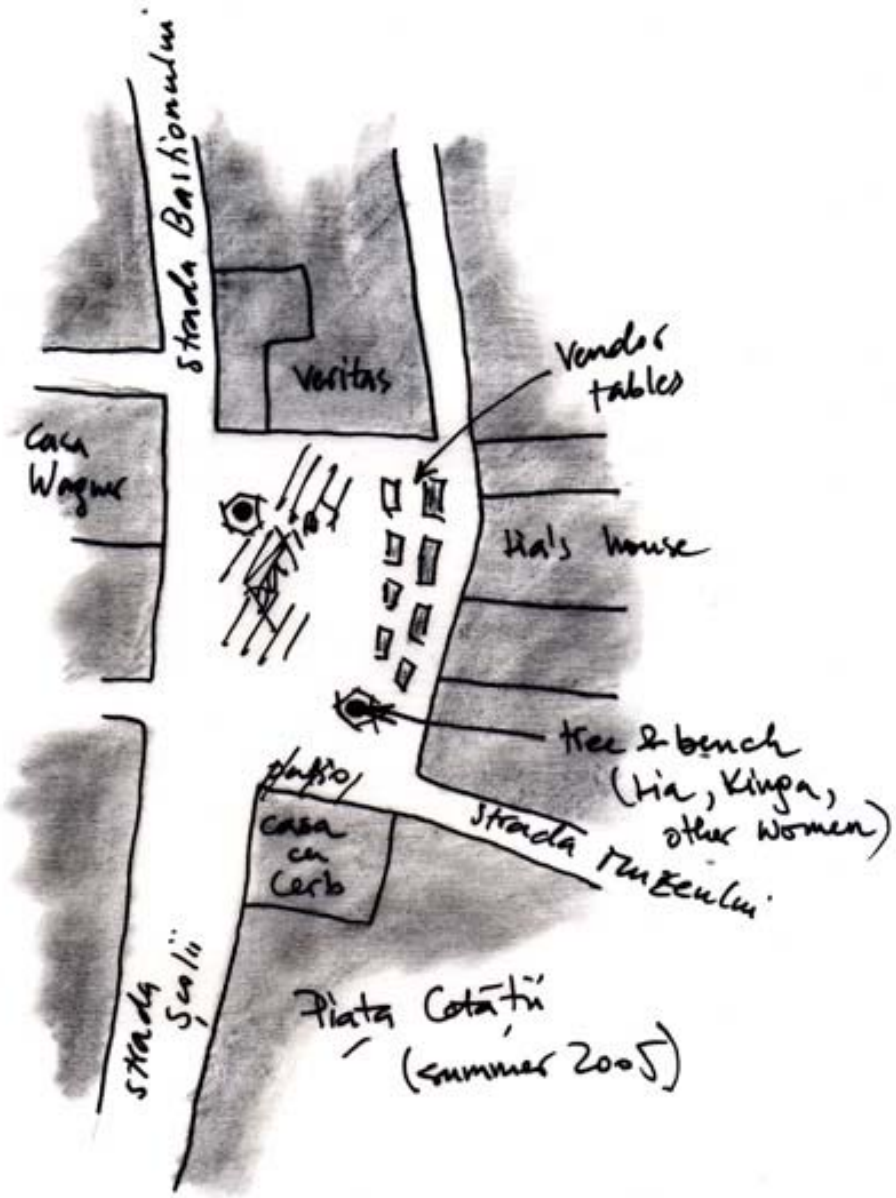


Illustration 17: Piața Cetății, with the three and bench where Lia, Kinga, and other women were talking.

I looked over to Kinga, the 30-year-old reminiscing about the loss of her childhood space. Then I looked back to the square. About half of it was filled with restaurant patios, with beer and Coca-Cola umbrellas obscuring the sky and even the view of the rest of the square. To the right, two rows of tables and wooden stands, filled with souvenirs. Lia was moving frantically between us and one of the tables she was watching in exchange for a small sales commission. She was making macramé to sell later, attending to tourists and to our conversation.

The space indeed felt closed in on. We were, in a way, pushed into the only open corner left, and it felt like we were objects the universe put in a box to deal with later while it was cleaning up and rearranging the square. Over the previous three years, the City Hall had started renting out space to restaurant owners in and around the main square, in an area increasingly gentrified and populated by dense business interests and tourist presence. First one restaurant, then two, then four. A communal space now talked about in terms of square meters, and restaurant names, and accessed through a couple of euros worth of coke, beer, or snacks. The public space of the citadel seemed to be circumscribed by the market, both as an organizing principle and a domain of practice: the space, leveled on a metric grid, assigned a monetary value, and accessed primarily through consumption.

The nostalgia that Marina, Kinga, and the others feel reminiscing about their happy childhoods in the citadel is partly imbued with the experience of exclusivity, entitlement, and familiarity. At the same time, it carries traces of the pre-1989 experience of public space in general as communal, as 'ours,' even if, technically, was the property of the state. The *continued* presence of these women in this particular space, as oriented by these changes as it is, thus still speaks of a sense of entitlement and normalcy in claiming the *public* for the public's use. It speaks of a continuity not only in

inhabiting this familiar physical space, but also of a discursive one, with the *public* as something they feel they are fully entitled to.

In discussing the meanings of *public* in socialist Eastern and Central Europe, Susan Gal (2002) uses what she calls fractal distinctions: although seemingly two separate spheres, the public and the private can be found folded into each other. She argues that in the socialist Eastern and Central Europe, the public/private distinction has to be understood as part of the "discursive opposition between a victimized 'us'" (p. 87) and the more powerful state, constantly intervening in the meaning of public and private, with the "public" sometimes becoming "private," in retaliation or for self-compensation, as people felt that since it is communal, it must be theirs, as well, for their own private use. People would serenely 'take' objects that were the property of the state, as well as abuse spaces and places meant for communal use.

So the *public* was about the relationship between people and the state, but with the state now articulating its workings with those of the market, through public spaces, the public becomes a domain where people can rehearse and negotiate their relationship to both the market and the changing state on potentially different and destabilizing terms.

Katherine Verdery (2003) touches on the same issue of troubling continuities when suggesting that some Romanian villagers' anger at seeing the formerly state owned mill sold to private investors in mid 1990s can be explained through a relationship of entitlement between the villagers and state/"public" property, as, the villagers argued, their own labor—which contributed to building and maintaining the mill—was congealed in it. Investing use, labor, time speaks of entitlement and can potentially warp the logics of the market as well as people's relationship to it.

This is why the "domestic" presence of these local women in this privatized, commercialized space gave me hope and excitement. Their gendered presence in a space

where their men and others could be sitting and drinking, the unruliness and lack of self awareness of their loud voices, of their outrageous stories, of their boring clothes opened a space that refused to be sanitized and disciplined, and to accept the mighty tourist gaze that seemed to organize the rest of the site. These women were the ultimate tourist back stage, the one nobody really wants to see. Their domestic labor, their private stories were out, in the open.

Kinga was watching her worryingly mobile one year old, Lia has knitting and looking after her two children, often herding them closer to her, and Marina and her sister stopped to talk to us after a walk around the block with her one year old niece. The presence of all of these women (except for Marina) was partly a product of structural, gendered unemployment, as well as particular social and reproductive state policies. They all have lost their jobs in the now mostly defunct local textile and ceramics industry and were stay-at-home moms, taking advantage of the pro-birth state policy. The state was paying eligible parents for two years to stay at home with their newborns, in response to the low national birth rate induced by social insecurities as well as legalized abortion. After about fifty years of celebratory, if hypocritical socialist women's liberation, these women—and many other thousands—were sliding into even more conservative gender arrangements, sanctioned and encouraged by the state as well as by a revival of Orthodox religious conservatism.

But, these women were not sitting quietly, hidden and isolated in their homes. They were chatting, loudly, sprawled over and around a wooden bench, in the main square of the citadel.

I was sitting on that bench, next to Kinga, who was now trying to put her son to sleep in his stroller. "Yours is so much better than mine used to be," said Lia. "Mine just cried continuously until he was six months old." I turned to Kinga, "he's just like you,

isn't he," I said, referring to his looks. "Yeah, and he's just as crazy as me." She paused, and then she went on about how she can't do this anymore, stay with the child. "I can't do anything now, and Zoli [her husband] won't let me go anywhere, he keeps telling me, where do you think you're going, you're a woman with a child now. He won't stay with the child for five minutes. I love him, he's my child, but sometimes I feel like throwing him against the wall." She went on about Zoli's involvement with XX, the NGO, and the endless hours spent at meetings or in front of the computer "writing grants." "At least, if some money came out of this," she said, "I would understand. But, all he does is go to the meetings or sit in front of the computer." We chatted some more, and then all the women agreed, building on each other's words. Yeah, all men are the same, and they come to us and say, "what are you complaining about, how hard can it be to raise a child, you put it to sleep, give it some food, what else does it need. But, they have no idea what this means, and they just demand us to lay the table, wash their clothes," said one of the women. Lia continued, "Yeah, my Nicu just waits for me to lay the table, clean the table, and then he just keeps saying that I shouldn't be outside, that I like too much to be outside the house and not do my work at home, but I tell him that I need to work, and sell some in the square, otherwise the money isn't enough."

Kinga walked to the Center terasa in the square, about fifteen meters away, bought a beer, came back and then recounted how she and her husband met and then married. A year into the marriage, she got pregnant but lost the baby. "I only found out the cause when I got pregnant again," she said, and stood up. "My uterus is shaped like a capital E, instead of being normal," she said loudly, performing the uterus with wide gestures, "like this."

Her E shaped uterus meant a difficult birth in Tg. Mureş, in the county hospital about 60 kilometers away. The doctors insisted that she should have a C section and they

kept her without food for three days. The hospital was too busy with emergencies and they kept forgetting about her. Another woman, who was selling at one of the souvenir tables joined us, and together they started talking about childbirth. By now, we were all standing, slightly away from the bench. They all had childbirth stories, from their own experience or from others', and some were full of humor. Apparently, there was this woman who refused to push until they let her smoke one cigarette in the delivery room. The energy was just wonderful. They were jumping from one story to another, from one idea to another, non-linearly, but somehow coherent.

As we were talking, we got interrupted by Dan, a man whom most of us knew. Lia took him aside to show her decrepit house, in danger of collapsing after her neighbor, a tourism investor, tried to renovate his house illegally. The Town Hall people refused to take any measure and took the neighbor's side, and Lia was determined to make everyone pay, so she was spreading the story to whomever had an ear to listen.

Kinga took advantage of the interruption and went on about her birth. She was talking passionately and with some kind of pride, as if the experience had been an adventure, or maybe how soldiers talk about their time in the war, a nostalgic memory of a traumatic experience. "I was shaking, like this, when they took me into the delivery room, and I saw this woman that had been in my room, and had tubes going down her throat, lying motionless on a stretcher. And, there were these two Gypsy women whogave birth, you should have been there to hear them scream. And, then they put me to sleep and did the C section."

"Oh, I had a C section," said Lia, coming back, and Kinga, now sitting, stood up and opened her pants buttons, pulled her underwear down a bit and showed us the cut. "Yours shows more," said Lia, "mine barely shows." "I think mine will eventually go

away, too." Then, the discussion continued on the relationship between weight, pregnancy, and the visibility of a C section scar.

I was standing there, not terribly alarmed but a little dazed, looking at these respectable family women pulling down their underwear in the middle of the medieval vestiges of a World Heritage site. Then it occurred to me that earlier that afternoon and between attending to two customers Lia pulled up her shirt to show us a scar she got when her abdominal muscle broke while pregnant with her first child.

Kinga reminded us that she had a very difficult pregnancy and she was recommended not to get pregnant for the next six years. Lia intervened and said that she was also told not to have a second child, after her muscle rupture. "But I got pregnant again right away, and I was going to have an abortion, but somehow my husband's family found out and did everything to stop me. My mom understood me and supported my decision. So, I was going to have the abortion, but then right before it I changed my mind. Viorel [her four-year-old son] knows about this for sure, and that's why he is such a bad child, he is torturing me to pay for thinking about abortion." The discussion slowly migrated to other topics and Kinga said at some point that she can't wait for the two years to be up to find a job and get the hell out of the house.

That moment, although structured by state politics and the emerging market logic, as well as by dominant gender arrangements, opened a hopeful, if ephemeral space of possibilities. It was a space where a particular kind of sociality was created and maintained, one in which the women's lives and experiences and bodies were valued and validated. That space of possibilities was, I suggest, partly left open by continuities in thinking about and inhabiting the *public*. It was filled with these muddied understandings of public/private divisions and overlaps, which had the potential of intervening into the logics of the market and the home as well as these women's relationship to each other,

the market, and the state. The space was also filled with the potential of carrying these possibilities over, into other tactical spaces, and maybe working on existing gender arrangements.

In the summer of 2006 I returned to Sighişoara to see some of these possibilities disciplined and dispersed, and new spaces of possibilities opened, more tightly and coherently wrapped around the dominant logics. The square has been filled up with two more patios, now sprawling over the area formerly occupied by the vendor stands where Lia and some other women used to work. Another hotel has opened, and its building was painted a new, almost offendingly bright, blue. The bench was engulfed by one of the patios, with only one side completely open. I had a hard time finding Lia; she was working with a foreign-funded NGO in her husband's village to renovate the local fortified church and promote tourism in the area. Kinga went back to work, in the same company her husband is working for, and she was also working on transforming the basement of her house into a souvenir shop, where she could work and be able to attend to her family.

The closing up of this physical space speaks of narrowing and disciplining possibilities for imagining the *public* as outside the logic of the market, and also for excluding, or at least unwelcoming, alternative practices and ways of being. For these women, taking away access to physical public space is, in this case and probably others, a way of foreclosing certain possibilities to tactically navigate through and transcend some of the forces structuring their lives. What was threatening in these women was their seemingly unrestrained presence, the blurry boundaries between various kinds of labor and leisure (what Lia was doing, watching the stand, crocheting, watching her kids, talking), and their very sociality. They have found these interstices, left open by an incomplete and not quite efficient commercialization of the space, but have been

squeezed out by the market grid, and so has their unmanaged, domestic, self-employed labor.

ORDERING

The women were the ones, really, keeping the Center running: Raluca, the accountant, Linda the secretary, and Diana, the hostel's and the restaurant's administrator and also Martin's wife. Diana used to live in the citadel, but Raluca and Linda were brought up here by their jobs. The citadel meant, for them, work, in the same way it meant, for most Sighişoara residents, that they had to solve a problem or they were going to a wedding, since the Town Hall was located there, as well.

One time, I was walking home with Linda. We passed under the Clock Tower, retracing my steps, the way I arrived that June day looking for work. As we were walking down, she looked up at the vaulted stone ceilings of the tunnel and said, "I never got up there to the tower, I guess I should try to go, once, before I die." I looked at her intrigued, and she added quickly. "If you ask most people in Sighişoara if they went up in the tower, they will tell you, once, on a school field trip." But, I thought to myself, the tower gives you this wonderful panorama of the city, and it has the history museum. Every single tourist goes up there. I was appalled, but I said nothing. And, Linda walks under it twice a day, I thought. "Fine, fine, I'll go with my daughter, once," she said, in response to my intense frowning. But, really, I wasn't better either. There is a small room, in the museum square, which hosts the museum's weapons collection. It took me two years to enter it, and even when I did, it was to leave some flyers for an exhibition I was helping with. For more than two years, I had had no desire to see what's inside.

The festivals might have been a time when the citadel became something else for the locals, although many preferred to leave it to the tourists and spend time in the lower

town, eating *mici* and drinking beer. But, for the people working in the citadel, even during the festival, it meant one thing, work, because this is when most of the revenue was made.

My first summer at the Center during the medieval festival, I would, every now and then, take time off from my participant observation (which included a lot of participation, to be honest) and check in with my work colleagues, to see how they were holding up. They had a lot of hired help, but everybody was still there. Raluca and Diana were taking care of the money, collecting the cash from the bars and the stands they had throughout the citadel. The stands—large refrigerators full of sodas--were really important, and they required special authorization, being, just like the *terase*, part of the same intricate system of informal practices that linked the local administration to the local businesses. It was already 2 AM on Saturday, and people were still running around like chickens with their heads cut off. I went into the main building, where both the kitchen and the offices were, and I bumped into a cursing mumbling Linda, cleaning a toilet that had just overflowed. I helped her and listened to her complaining. "That's not what I came here to the Center for," she said, but continued on with the cleaning.

One afternoon after the medieval festival I sat by Carmen, who was serving at the Center *terasa* in the courtyard. It was a sunny, pleasant day, and many people were out, drinking, both tourists and locals. We talked small talk for a while, perched on the tall chairs, with her pointing out people that she knew. "And that one, Sorin, used to be my boyfriend, but we don't talk anymore." I asked her what she thought of the medieval festival, if she liked it. That turned out to be a stupid question. She didn't answer directly, and rather talked about how tired she was. For her too, the festival meant sixteen-hour work days. She was exhausted, drained out. "On Sunday night I wanted to go home, but there were still people at the tables. You know how Martin wants us to

keep the place open, until the last customer leaves." Yes, I knew, and during the festival that meant keeping the place open all night long. In the off season, the last customer was Martin himself, with some of his friends. "But, thank god, on Sunday things seemed to cool down. As I was closing, around three, some friends showed up, so we went to the square [on the other *terasa*], made some popcorn and drank beer and talked until seven in the morning." They had a great time, and she could finally relax. She wouldn't have to work for days and she could sleep all she wanted, so she went home and went to bed right away. After two hours she got a call from work. All the temp work for the festival had been fired, they were swamped again, and she needed to come back. So she worked another long day.

Staying after closing and partying with friends, or just drinking and chatting was not uncommon, as I came to learn afterwards. Most of the waiters and bartenders did it: especially Carmen, Codruța (Diana's sister), and a couple of other girls. They were all single, fairly attractive, with strong bodies from all the physical work their job required. They were quick, and smart, and independent. I was surprised to see these very "eligible" women, in their mid to late twenties, being able to imagine and live financially and socially independent lives in a small town like Sighişoara. Even Raluca, who seemed otherwise fairly conservative, refused to get married to the man she has been living with for almost eight years until she got pregnant, and insisted on her financial independence.

To learn about their partying in the same space they were working was exciting to me also because I saw it as a symbolic gesture of claiming this space for themselves and of crossing an ultimately oppressive boundary between paid labor and leisure. They were using the little privilege they had—control over and access to these spaces through their job—not only to cross over into this space they were excluded from, but also to transform it. They played *manele*, a musical form associated with the lower classes and the urban

Romani, they danced on the tables, they were loud and obnoxious. I know from stories from both Codruța and Carmen that they often did the same in the other restaurants and bars, at Hotel Sighişoara and Casa Wagner, with the waiters and bartenders there. They often made the last customers—usually drunken confused foreigners, but also some locals—join in, showing them "how we party here in Romania."

My excitement was tempered by the regret that their transgression was still structured along the same arrangement: this space was a space of consumption, for consumption, and their transgression was mediated and enabled by it. In the larger scheme of things, their transgression was nothing but an inconsequential temporary flip, an appeasing of bottled up resentment against bosses, and labor, and the endless tourists they had to serve. It just made it all keep going.

These moments of high were, actually, rather the exception, as the cadence of everyday life was more somber and less liberating. There were the moments of chatting, and warm camaraderie, and also a sense of ownership over and belonging to the citadel, but, ultimately, for these women (and men like nea' András and nea' Dorel) there was mostly work.

The worst was the kiosk for the *terasa* in the citadel square, generally referred to by people at the Center as "in the square." The square itself shrank to this point, the kiosk, which constantly had to be supplied by crates and crates of beer and sodas, and cleared of empty ones, whose espresso machine had to be constantly filled with water, whose shelves had to be constantly restocked with cigarettes and snacks. At night, all the coolers would be locked up, and everything on the shelves either came down or was consolidated in one place, all guarded by a person hired by the Center precisely to do this. The first person in the morning and the last in the evening had to count the stock and

write it down. For the people doing it day after day it felt almost like counting hairs and losing count to only start over.

The kiosk had now its own electric supply—a direct connection to the network and its own meter. Until 2004, they ran an electric cable all the way from the Center, down the street, by Casa Wagner, leaving the Dutchman fuming, thinking of all of his clients that might trip over the cable.

The Center *terasa* was the first one right in the middle of the square, and has survived and grown thanks to Martin's close friendship to one of the Councilmen, and also thanks to Ghiță's inexplicable influence on certain City Hall people. The kiosk was actually a wooden stand, covered by some kind of tarp and one large umbrella, keeping sun and rain away from whoever was working there. In 2006, Martin finally changed the kiosk to a slightly larger one, which he got as a sponsorship deal from Coca Cola for the Center's yearly festival.

They opened the kiosk in mid-spring, and closed it in mid to late fall. Martin set a rule: they had to be making, constantly, less than 2 million lei (about 75 USD) a day before they could close it down for the year. It was unfortunate that they kept making more than that well into the fall, from occasional tourists, locals wanting a cheap cup of coffee in the morning, and schoolchildren who attended the schools in the citadel. The kids were particularly good customers. They would also constantly skip classes and hang out, smoking and drinking, in the basement bar at the Center, occasionally hunted by the principal or his wife and clucking away laughing, like chicken.

Late September that year already felt like November. It was cold and threatening to rain, and you could feel it all in your bones. On my way home, I stopped by the kiosk in the square intent on chatting with Carmen for five minutes only. She seemed lonely and cold. I lent her my hooded sweatshirt—she needed it badly—and sat down in a chair

covered with a brown and beige blanket. In the other one, in which she was sitting, there was a folded sleeping bag, which belonged to the night guard. I have no idea how we got to talking about school. I bought a bag of sunflower seeds from her, joking that I was helping Martin keep her there another day, and started munching on them. I was tempted to spit the shells on the ground, but I thought how my mother would be appalled and, besides, Carmen was the one who would have to clean them up.

She used to be bad, she said, so bad that she got kicked out of her high school and forced to move to its twin trade school, for those less endowed academically and in need of a practical skill. I tried to probe her for what exactly bad meant, and I got endless stories of skipping school, and bullying other girls, and terrorizing the teachers. It didn't seem like Carmen at all. She was smart, and kind, and considerate. Both schools were the educational appendix of the local textile industry, teaching young girls (and very few, if any, boys) how to cut, sew, and operate the various textile-making machines.

After graduation, she started working in one of the newly opened sweatshops that were replacing the larger, bankrupt, textile factories. The one that hired her was quite large: there were three hundred women, working in three shifts, and making men's shirts for export. She loved it there. She liked the work and the challenge of impossibly high quotas, she loved working with all those other women, taking smoking breaks, and gossiping about their cruel Italian employer who seemed to pick on everyone. The shop finally closed down, and she had to find something else. By then, she had gotten used to living on her own, in town, although she would often visit her family in a village nearby.

"I've had enough of this," she said between two coughs—the cold really got into her bones. "I've had enough of sitting here in the cold and making money for Martin, so that he can sit and do nothing." I felt guilty for sitting in my cozy indoor office and making about the same amount she was making, without bringing "real" money in. "And

what are you going to do?" I asked. "I don't know." There wasn't much she could do. With the tourist season winding down, there was less and less work. The rhythm of this space—full and intense in the summer, empty and slow in the winter—would ripple through the entire local economy. In the winter, there was no cash, no jobs, all suppliers would work on debt, hoping that the next season would trickle money all the way into their accounts. She was stuck. She was actually lucky because she was good: honest, smart, and hard working, and she would be able to keep her job. "Maybe I'll go work with my brother fixing cars and replacing tires." We both knew she wouldn't, and of course, two years later, she was still working in the same place. As Lia and Kinga and other women like them were being slowly squeezed out, Carmen was literally stuck. Unsettling kinds of labor and leisure—with ambiguous boundaries and allegiances—were replaced by Carmen's employment. What was appealing about Carmen's work, to the general, emerging order in the square, was that its allegiance was clear, that it was rationalized in hours and money, and above all that it was replaceable.

In the summer of 2006, as I was bitterly contemplating these changes in the citadel, I would bump into the same lady, everyday. I had known her since 2004, and I think I remember seeing her even before that. She was in her early sixties and looked like a country woman, with clean and new, yet hideous and mismatched clothes and a fast, purposeful walk. She wore a long patterned skirt and a differently patterned silk shirt, to which she added, in 2006, a yellow trucker's hat. From my first year of work there I nicknamed her '*Racolatoarea,*' which would approximately translate in English as the 'Recruiter,' with a hue of implied illicit/secret service activity. She walked the citadel frantically, approaching every single person who looked to her like a tourist. "Cazare, cazare, doriți cazare," she would whisper in Romanian, completely oblivious to the fact that her interlocutor could not understand a word. She spoke no foreign languages, but

somehow, she would get her point across, and often manage to drag the defenseless recruitees to a small B&B by the citadel wall, owned (I learnt later) by her son-in-law, or to another house, up the same street. She approached me with the same purpose several times, even after seeing me walk the citadel on my way to work and back, for months. I tried to approach her myself, in order to find out more about her life and what she was doing, but her attention span shrank to zero as soon as she realized I was not interested in renting. She was not the only local renting out space in her home, but she was definitely the most aggressive and probably the most successful. She was tireless and always zigzagging the street, whenever the weather permitted.

In the summer of 2006, I decided to sacrifice two tourists on the altar of my dissertation, and I took to her an unsuspecting, middle aged couple from Arizona. They stumbled upon Sighişoara and were wondering if they could find a place to stay that was not a 50-euros-per-night hotel. "Of course," and I took them straight to the *Racolatoare*. She smiled to them, and talked to them in Romanian. The B&B was full, so we went to the house, where she showed us what was obviously the formal dining/living room, left (like in many Romanian homes) unused, yet polished and equipped with the nicest furniture and decorations: porcelain puppies and ballerinas and many, many doilies. On one side, there was a folded out couch, already laid with clean linens. The Arizona woman smiled politely and asked me to translate that they would be thinking about it, although she told me, as we were walking out, that she had no intention of sleeping in somebody's formal dining room. I met the couple later in the evening and they told me that they got captured again, and were staying with the *Racolatoare.*

I'm thinking now of Martin and Ghiță, sitting and drinking, bossing people around and waiting for tourists to come to them. I'm thinking of all the other hotels in the citadel, with professionalized services, hiring concierges who spoke three languages,

wore white shirts, and make-up. In all this time, *Racolatoarea* hunts on the citadel's streets, uncontrolled, with her peculiar, localized autism, repeatedly harassing the same people, aesthetically left outside the emerging space of professionalized tourism and quaint local character. Probably retired from another job, she works for herself and her family, at odd hours, and most likely without direct pay. She didn't socialize with the regulars (working or living in the citadel) and she relentlessly did her work.

CONCLUSION

There is a large square by my home in Tg. Mureş, in the working class neighborhood I grew up and where my parents still live. Desolate and covered with asphalt and stones, it was the vast and beloved playground of several generations of children, including myself. Soon after 1989, the city transformed it into something of a flea market, crammed with used stuff as well as cheap plastics and textiles from China, probably the same that put Sighişoara's industry out of business.

I can't not notice the drive to "fill up" spaces, to make them "useful," to put them to work, in Tg. Mureş, Sighişoara, and many other places. These spaces are often fenced in and enter the economy not only through the commodities that get sold there, but also through the accounting system, being measured, assessed, divided, rented out or sold. In Sighişoara, this process almost seems like an afterthought, an unintended consequence—what is to be consumed, above all, is the place itself, its stories, and its experience. But, it is not. This process is central to many of the transformations not only of public spaces, but of the public sphere in general, of how local politics articulate with the local economy, how elites and hierarchies are produced and reinforced through the constant ordering and disciplining of boundaries between paid labor, consumption, and leisure, the public and the private. This process also works within and with existing social

arrangements, in particular gender and ethnicity, conveniently accommodating and being accommodated by them. The state is not abandoning these spaces; on the contrary, it becomes a major mediator for these transformations, both through its policies and its people.

My fear is that the kinds of agency that become or remain available to people allow them to move, tactically, only within and along the confining lines that I described above. The hope for any change might come, ironically, from the possibilities that come in along the many flows that connect the square, the citadel, Sighişoara, to a globalized symbolic and material economy.

Chapter 4: Sustainability

PRELUDE: PRODUCTIVE GAPS

I don't know where it came from, this sense of indignation and entitlement, that I know and I have the right to decide exactly how things should be done. It was certainly connected with the general irritated predisposition in dealing with Martin and some of the men I was working with at the Center, and also rooted in the (thus revealed) limits to my supposedly progressive praxis. The self righteous indignation conveniently molded itself to the space opened by its moment of expression. I was explaining Janice, a Peace Corps volunteer that I befriended possibly to attend to my partial and endangered Americanness, that Martin was going to print the calendar, yet again, at his good friend's Steffi's print shop. This, despite my insistent attempts to bring into the organization modern, efficient, professional business practices. While working at the Center, I had built an entire database with print shops around the country, and I asked some of them for quotes, through beautifully formatted, standardized faxes, followed by courteous and professional phone calls. (Janice had once remarked that the normal chicken clucking quality of the Romanian language seemed to disappear from my voice when I was making those calls.) I organized the information in tables from which it *clearly* resulted that there were not one, but several, large modern shops in Bucharest that would have done it fairly cheaply. Martin couldn't care less. We were going to print the calendars, just like we did with the brochures and the festival newsletters, at Steffi's, the shop owned by his friend. I was irritated by Martin's disregard for my obvious managerial genius, but I translated it to Janice into a story of corruption, backwardness, and an

organization headed to bankruptcy hell. The calendars were going to be (and indeed, were) poorly done, and they were going to cost more (which they did).

Janice, as expected, was supportive of my interpretation. After all, she was (a discursive) part of the story. Exactly how important her role was, or rather what her presence was able to conjure, became apparent after she left, crossing the citadel square on her way home. I sat carefully on the wooden bench, on its edge, barely releasing my weight (the winter was almost here, and the bench was cold), thinking of what kind of notes I was going to write about this. I thought of Austin, TX, where I had spent four years prior to returning home to Romania for fieldwork.

This would not happen in Austin, I said to myself.

Oh, yes, it would. And people would be cheering it on, as they would cheer Martin, and Steffi, and everybody else who chose Steffi over a big business in the capital. "Choose Austin first." "Support local businesses." "Keep Austin weird."

Right.

This made me suspicious of myself. I was surprised at how easily I was able to inhabit a position rooted in developmental discourses that I have spent years learning how to critique. It seemed so easy and natural to just jump to feeling frustrated by these people's refusal of progress, of the economic lessons of the West, of the neoliberal fantasies of smooth markets and rational economic choices. I thus filled the space between my 'professional' habitus and Martin's opposition to it with stories that validated it and at the same time implied particular visions of the future which, surprised and ashamed, I had to admit to having.

What was more shameful in my story of Martin's and Sighişoara's backwardness was, I thought, the kind of subjectivity that I was affording to someone in Austin and refusing to someone in Sighişoara. For a local Austinite, there were few boundaries

between the progressive academic heavens and everyday theorizing. I implied that clear political consciousness, progressive analysis, and responsible action in the everyday were connected in Austin and impossible in Sighişoara. Once past my initial shame, I forced myself to see how Martin's behavior *made sense*. This particular deal—printing the calendars at Steffi's—was actually part of a system of mutual support and somewhat delayed reciprocity. The Center would always try to give its business to this local printer because the printer would accept installments and delayed payments, and also would be more tolerant with sloppy preparation work and last minute changes. The same kind of business behavior was extended to most suppliers—local was better, as it was embedded in and understood the seasonal nature of Sighişoara's tourist economy and the Center's unreliable budget.

Besides, corruption as an explanation was not completely outside the local logic. I witnessed a language that pointed to it,[71] as well as to its concrete results: local networks of power that were thus built and sustained. One time, the woman hired for cleaning at the Center burst into frustration when she found out that nobody was punished for an inside theft. "They're all one dough, they're all working together, this whole town is like that." I often found myself talking to Linda and Raluca at the Center, lamenting the unfairness of how business was done, and treating "corruption" as some kind of privilege that we didn't quite have access to. *This local* corruption was not *that developmental* corruption, it had different social realities and politics.

Such an analysis, while temporarily soothing, was not all that redeeming. Sitting on several years of anthropology grad school, a particular transnational experience, and claims of vision from the *inside*, I still made Austin a space of political and practical

[71] "Sunt pe-o mână" ("They're working together"), "Se cunosc" ("They know each other"), "Işi aranjează treburile" ("They're fixing their own business"), "Le pică la amândoi ceva" ("They both will gain something").

engagement, and Sighişoara an object of analysis, affording it a cultural logic and some measure of political consciousness dependent on my benevolent political progressiveness. Although tempting, I do not want to limit my analysis to explanations about my position, positionality, of exactly what kind of voice I inhabit at each discrete moment. Such an analytical route—although useful in its own right—makes me queasy. In trying to neatly outline and separate my "positions" and keep them still for analysis long enough for me to figure out what ideologies and practices are attached to them, I am rendering invisible the generative processes and the rich social reality that they participate in and that allows them to coexist.

I want to draw attention to these uncomfortable moments, balancing my weight on the edge of the bench as well as making two explanations, corruption and local logic, meet and not meet, dismiss or redeem one another. It was, for sure, hard cultural work. But, discourses like that exist in Sighişoara, independent of my presence there and not always dependent on their own genealogies. They are connected and disconnected, competing and collaborating, and there is considerable work—cultural work—involved in keeping them apart as well as filling that gap. The generativity that surrounds them is what fascinates me and what this dissertation is partly about.

I find the word *conjuring* useful here, and I thank Anna Tsing (2005) for unknowingly inspiring this. We, our gestures, our actions, our words, our winks and our twitches work, not only at the moment of initiation, and as expressions of particular ideologies and intentions, but as they meet others, and often through the promise of that sometimes awkward encounter. What we are conjuring is, in fact, the gap between all of these perceived lines of positioning, identification, and intention. I am interested in connections, in what Anna Tsing calls "heterogeneous and unequal encounters" (Tsing, 2005, p. 5), where "disparate regimes of economic understanding" (Downey & Fisher,

2006, p. 9) as well as different and differently scaled mechanisms of power are able to articulate, often through invoking some kind of universal. I am interested in these 'sticky engagements,' and in particular in the force, the impulse that is gathered from the encounter, which seems to have a generative quality and translates in the proliferation of new practices, solutions, and even arrangements of power, building on and articulating well with existing ones. I am interested in that generativity, that dynamism that comes from that encounter and draws its energy precisely from the unevenness and the conflict that people glimpse at, as a possibility of the future.

In this chapter, I am looking at one kind of sticky engagement, attending to a *zone* of similar engagements between foreign donors interested in heritage preservation and cultural programs and local NGO recipients. These engagements revolve around invoking universalizing concepts like "development," "sustainability," "heritage preservation" (or the belief that something constitutes heritage and is worth preserving), and "civil society" (as a desirable third social sphere, apart from the formal political sphere and that of an independent, self regulating market economy)[72] (Gellner, 1994; Kumar, 1993). Local and foreign actors stick not because of their similarities, but in spite of their differences and heterogeneity, and this leads to a lot of energy put not only in making the encounter work, but also managing its growing implications. It is like living mold, growing and proliferating in the spaces left open by discrepant understandings, connecting people, moving money, transforming spaces. What is a historical building? How should it be preserved, used? What will happen to the money? Even misunderstood, contested, or misused, when conjured, the language of historical

[72] I am careful not to equate this the NGOs with civil society (as an imagined independent non-political and non-economic sphere), although many have noticed a tendency, especially in the post socialist societies of Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, to conflate the two; they are imagined, both by some locals involved in NGO work and by foreign development and aid workers, as closely connected, and a strong NGO sector is presumed to be able to create a strong, independent, and functional civil society (Abramson, 1999; Hemment, 1998; Ishkanian, 2003).

preservation, the logic of development, practices connected to sustainability, all create real spaces, spaces of practice, spaces of cultural and economic work.

I am not the first to point towards the productive gap attached to the aid development industry in Eastern Europe. Wedel describes the same kinds of spaces, paying attention, though, only to the relationships between donors and recipients. She argues that, in approaching the aid delivery process to Eastern and Central Europe, it is useful to think it through the metaphor of "a series of chemical reactions that begin with the donor's policies, but are transformed by the agendas, interests, and interactions of the donor and recipient representatives at each stage of implementation and interface" (Wedel, 2001, p. 8).

Drawing on their experience as consultants or seminar participants in Albania and Uzbekistan, Sampson (1996; , 2002) and Abramson (1999) warn interested parties about how the often well intended development aid process directed at Eastern European or Central Asian post-socialist countries can be corrupted by either the impossibility of perfectly translating western models onto local realities or by the native's ingenuity and private interests. They are both worried by the often unexpected results of these kinds of interventions, as well as by the risk of creating and sustaining new elites that are connected to this influx of resources and models. In the same vein, Mandel (2002) worries about the professionalization of indigenous development/NGO workers that leads to either a new kind of social elitism or the eventual export of highly qualified development personnel who prefer to work abroad rather than locally. Fisher expresses similar concerns about the sphere of NGOs in "developing" countries as threatened by routinization, institutionalization, and professionalization, which have the potential to subvert the declared objectives of these organizations and transform the potential for participation into oligarchic, patron/client relationships (Fisher, 1997).

The creative, unexpected work that local actors put into attracting, securing, and using foreign resources is often couched in the language of 'survival' responses fitting within local logics (Bridger & Pine, 1998; Bruno, 1996).

While these engagements are highly productive in terms of practices and understandings, they tend to be patterned into solutions whose translation and transfer into other areas of social life have a productive power of their own. I see, therefore, this zone of encounters as one of intensification and acceleration, matching, as many have suggested (Harvey, 1990; Ong, 1999, , 2006; Tsing, 2005), the accelerated nature of capitalist expansion. In the same time, it has local specificity, and the stickiness is connected to it: imagining Sighişoara and the surrounding area as primarily connected to a German past, invoking a quintessentially European inheritance and claims for a European future, being deeply involved in the local tourist economy. It is dependent on and works through local informal practices and knowledges that show continuities with pre-1989 ones (Berdahl, Bunzl, & Lampland, 2000; Bridger & Pine, 1998; Burawoy & Verdery, 1999; Mandel & Humphrey, 2002; Verdery, 1996), and also tends to be centripetal, drawing in the existing major local actors and networks of power.

In this, I choose to look at post-socialist transformations—whatever they are—not as some kind of social reality that, rolled from a socialist past towards a post-socialist future via a transitional present, holds within itself the seed of what is to become. Rather, I imagine the nature of those transformations as generative, excessive, open, and fundamentally embedded in the capitalism's expansion (Hann, 2002). I am interested more in their horizontal, productive character than in their diachronicity.

This last chapter builds on the previous three, trying to connect developmental imaginaries that encounter each other in this place, localized microeconomics (in the sense of how people conceive of business, business possibilities), and material transformations in the Sighişoara citadel, by closely following practices that connect local businesses, NGOs, and external preservation/cultural projects funding.

I am interested in two developmental imaginaries that articulate here, and which I began outlining in Chapter 1. The first one, centered in local understandings of entrepreneurship and in a changing economy that requires taking timely advantage of short-lived opportunities, looks for locally successful business models and solutions, creatively accessing and connecting resources, with results that are often read (locally and not only) through the trope of corruption[73].

The second one, a cluster centered somewhere to the west, imagines Sighişoara as in need of development, but not just any kind of development. This imaginary has left behind the triumphant era of privatization and restructuring preaching of the early 1990s (Burawoy & Verdery, 1999), and moved towards tighter upward accountability (rather than downward, toward beneficiaries) (Hulme & Edwards, 1997) and a greater faith in the power of bureaucracy. The same imaginary is bound to fears of a development that could go wrong, if unchecked, of tangible or intangible heritage (of particular kinds) that is in danger and in need of rescue. It is connected to infusions of money and other kinds of resources—and less of people in the form of consultants, which was the hallmark of the early period of transition (Wedel, 2001)—into the local economy through aid, investments, and direct institutional involvement. It is also increasingly more invested in

[73] For discussions of 'corruption' in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union as a local logic embedded in discursive and practiced continuities with a socialist period, in responses to current situations, as well as a blurring of the boundaries between the market and the state see (Ledeneva, 1998, , 2006; Ries, 2002). Also, for further discussion of how the blurring of distinctions between the state and the so-called 'civil society' is often addressed as 'corruption,' see (Gupta, 1995)

punctual solutions—through projects—built around culture as a 'sustainable' resource (Hackenberg, 2002; Wilson, 2003). What I am interested in, in fact, are precisely requests for sustainability that are attached to this infusion of resources and that open spaces of slippery interpretation where new and interesting business practices can thrive.

This chapter is, then, about the tourism solution that emerges as a zone of successful engagement between the two clusters of imaginaries, and that offers—at the level of imagined possibilities—replicable formulas for success. In Sighişoara, tourism and its business logic rely on the "free" value of heritage, on substantial initial investments, and the hope that, once set up, the business will run with a minimum of subsequent efforts or investments. Tourism is seen as a business that contains in itself all the necessary requirements to keep going and be successful. The large initial investments are made possible in the citadel by the buildings that have recently entered the real estate market, the cheap labor and materials, a flexible legislative and administrative environment, and access to foreign funds that come in for preservation or cultural heritage protection purposes.

VISIBLE SOLUTIONS

Vera's father, whom I had known since I was about fourteen, once intercepted me walking down the street, right in front of the hotel his daughter and her husband were running in one corner of the citadel square. "I heard you're working for Martin here, you should teach Vera how to get money. Those at *Casa cu Cerb* just put a whole new modern line in their kitchen." He seemed irritated—*Casa cu Cerb* had, he insisted, a perfectly good one that they bought only two years before. Vera and Rareş had to deal with their old one. They just didn't have enough money for anything new. I should have been confused, since I didn't know the details of the story firsthand, but I wasn't. "You

should start an NGO for her," he continued, confirming what I was thinking. Vera dismissed him with a wave, sighing nevertheless jealously about *Casa cu Cerb*'s new kitchen line.

But, Vera was right to be jealous. The hotel she was running was doing fairly well, especially in the summer, but not making enough money to justify such a seemingly unnecessary investment. Besides, the hotel's owner, her Dutch brother-in-law, was in a hurry to reap all of the now dwindling benefits of pre-EU accession: cheap houses, cheap labor, cheap materials, and an easily navigated—with the right connections—bureaucratic system. He bought the first building around 2000, for only 50,000 euros, fixed it up, then another one, across the street, then another one in Braşov, to start another hotel. Eventually, Vera did "get money" and her new kitchen line, but through PHARE, an EU pre-accession program, about two years later.

The impulse that Vera's father acted out made visible a pattern of possibilities and their attractiveness, colonizing imaginations and clustering expectations about how tourism works as a business in Sighişoara. It was connected to a public memory of foreign aid and intervention harnessed by inventive people that, all through the early and mid 1990s, started organizations, collected foreign aid and donations, imported cars and equipment without paying import taxes (Wedel, 2001). The impulse was identifying a coveted flow of resources that had in the meantime partly disappeared and was now tightly controlled and wrapped not around aid but around specific requests like sustainable development. It was connected, as well, to a localized microeconomics, born out of opportunity and necessity, a business model that privileged tourism and assumed its success while seeking profits by finding ways to cover large investment costs either through "free money" or through taking advantage of cheap local prices (for house, furnishings, etc.). Two laws (see Chapter 2) freed up most of the buildings in the citadel

for the real estate market, returning them to old owners or allowing them to be sold to current residents. One change of hands, from the state to private owners, then several others, with hopes of fast and sure profits and fears of sky-rocketing prices, once Romania joins the EU.

Casa cu Cerb is a large house on another corner in the square. Tall and white, it flaunts its privilege with nicely restored details—a stag head on the corner edge—and a portrait of Prince Charles, proudly displayed in the lobby (he visited the house once, being involved in the area through another organization). It has made it into all tourist guides about Sighişoara and most tourists stare at it, at least once, on their way up to the Church on the Hill. Residential until the early 1990s (with a temporary coffee and cake shop on the ground floor), *Casa cu Cerb* hosts now its own steward, a Romanian-German cultural center—an NGO founded in partnership with a German organization, Messerschmitt Stiftung. Messerschmitt had by now invested exorbitant amounts of money in restoring the building, following proper preservation procedures, and continuing to attract money for improvements and more preservation work. The same financing organization had won the Europa Nostra prize for Architectural Heritage in 2004 for restoring the Church on the Hill.

The cultural center doesn't have much of an activity, except for the occasional exhibitions it hosts (traveling or organized by other entities). It sometimes rents out rooms for seminars or small conferences. The building itself has been transformed into a hotel and restaurant, with spaces left for offices and exhibition rooms. The hotel and the restaurant are run by a company owned by the NGO for self-financing purposes, pouring—in intention at least—profits into the NGO as well as sustaining some of its operating expenses (utilities, etc). The business is quite successful during the high tourist

season, being able to support itself, but the initial as well as the subsequent investment costs were covered through funds coming in due to the NGO.

The director of the NGO, who also seems to be in charge of the major business decisions, is a nice man in his sixties, always neatly dressed and with a reserved, professional air. Although there is a sense that he is running both the NGO and the business as if they were his own, he doesn't do it with Martin's feudal approach. Rather, his is a bourgeois one, correct and restrained, sensitive to boundaries of property and employment, calculations of profit, and realistic plans for the future. His employees are paying for everything they are consuming, are not cut any slack, and have strict dress codes. Slowly, he is attempting to take control over the surrounding buildings. He unsuccessfully lobbied to remove tenants from an adjacent building, still owned by the city (to extend the hotel), and restored the basement of the Forum building (the German political organization) in order to move the souvenir shop from its current location next door, which he transformed into a snack shop (to capture a segment of the tourists interested in cheap food served fast).

The director is connected to the local German political organization and to some of its active members. He is participating in the local circle of power through both personal and business-related relationships, and his participation is clearly connected to the political clout that comes from access to heritage preservation funds (and the specialized knowledge related to that) as well as control over one of the major businesses in the citadel. The incoming funds have thinned (although a shiny kitchen line was squeezed through), but he is maintaining a place in the network by socializing with members of the elite, rallying with them around common business and political interests, as well as tolerating political moves that are not directly connected to his (or his NGO/company's) interests. The Local Council's approval for *Casa cu Cerb*'s patio in

the square—despite the prohibiting fire code regulations—attests to this relationship (see chapter 3).

The NGO, and in particular its uneven symbiosis with the company it owns, not only participates in the local space of power, but also expands it, offering paths of entrance and maneuver for the NGO's director and people connected to him, and connecting formal politics, the economic sphere and an increasingly resourceful third sector, as well as revealing the artificiality of the boundaries between those three.

The pressure for self-sustainability or at least for creating its appearance pushes NGO investments into directions connected to participation in the local economy, generating income, hiring and firing people, dealing with other business owners and finding common interests. And when these other business owners get elected to the Local Council (which they do) and vote on their own interests (designating public land for investments, changing taxes, giving authorizations, assigning public contracts, or spending the local budget) the connections leave serious, material marks.

What fascinates me, though, is the productive articulation between neoliberal pressures, benevolent projects of development, and a nationally/ethnically (German) motivated and transnationally expressed interest in heritage preservation. To return to the awkward engagement metaphor, there's no civil society sphere to neatly receive the involvement of foreign NGOs by producing local NGOs that will function on the terms that they imagine. And, indeed, the Romanian-German cultural center does nothing except to exist. In terms of locally sustained historical preservation, this kind of foreign involvement has yet to produce a result. Foreign projects and agendas get invariably disappointed here, but the engagement continues through convincing and willful points of articulation—mostly particular people, positioned in ways that make access and engagement possible—as well as *signs* that the engagements are successful (project

reports, media coverage, on-site schmoozing, and so on). Amidst all this "failure" what proliferates are new practices and solutions, ways of thinking and imagining, creating structures and connections to accommodate the money that can flow in and the restricting ways to spend it.

The solution that I described before is actually more of a pattern that I noticed. An NGO founded to match a possible incoming financial flow creates a limited liability business in order to address expectations of sustainability and the requests that the initial money poured into the project is not wasted. Funding agencies and organizations want to see legacies and lasting impacts. And, the pressures to do so are pushed forward by recent trends in project funding (in particular in the European context) to fund direct expenses rather than operating/overhead costs, and to request matching funds from the local community (a rather ridiculous request, given the small fiscal base and the lack of a local charitable tradition). So sustainability through business it is and, in Sighişoara, this means tourist-related business. The stubbornness with which the developmental imagination seems to get stuck on tourism might have something to do with how easy it is to make historical restoration and transforming spaces for tourism meet, both physically and on paper. It is also connected to the feeling that heritage has *value*, and we'd better find a way to make use of that. In Sighişoara, this obsession with taking advantage of the value of heritage is openly associated with the Romanian political and economic elite, as they are the ones that prepare—allegedly without remorse—the citadel and its buildings for consumption. At the other end of the spectrum, shyer local German voices defend their own heritage, protesting moves towards its commercial exploitation. (At the same time, the two German churches in the citadel charge admission, as well.) Heritage preservation—funded by German money—invariably gets connected to tourist

development and some kind of tourist use of those spaces. This is one way moral ownership over heritage and heritage exploitation meet in Sighişoara.

THE CENTER—A SUCCESSFUL SYMBIOSIS

But, tourism in Sighişoara is highly seasonal and embedded in the limitations of the surrounding infrastructure (bad and slow roads and a slow and inconvenient public transportation system) and those of a highly competitive tourist market. Most tourists just pass through in the summer, and the hotels lay empty for all winter (except Christmas and New Year's Eve) and most of the spring and fall. Tourism turns out to be a rather unprofitable business, and a hotel or restaurant that was supposed to sustain the NGO is rarely able to pour any money into it. Instead, money that comes in for cultural projects or investments (preservation or restoration work) is creatively detoured into covering losses or sustaining activity during the dead periods.

Raluca was really good at this. Well, any respectable accountant back home should be good at it. They work, talk to each other, share and improve solutions, transfer them to new situations. Under moralizing Western eyes, this gets framed as some breed of corruption, obscuring the fact that this kind of productive work sprouts in the spaces of possibility and necessity opened by developmental intervention, neoliberal restructuring, and sustainability preaching.

Raluca worked for the Center, the same NGO I was working for. She was also working as an accountant for the company the NGO owned for self-financing purposes, Intera. Intera runs a youth hostel, a restaurant (with a patio in the courtyard and in the citadel square), and a cellar-bar (with a secondary location open as needed). The NGO and the company share a group of buildings (with the NGO being located upstairs from

the restaurant) rented from the German Evangelical Parish and the Hungarian Roman Catholic parish, both on long term contracts.

The Center was Martin's child and continuing fantasy. Martin was born and raised in Germany, where he studied Romance and Slavic languages and cultures before coming to Romania to work for several years for *ifa*[74], a German governmental organization connected to the Ministry of Foreign Cultural Affairs. Martin started the Center in 2000 as a center for inter-ethnic education, with money from *ifa* as well as directly from the German government, through the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe[75]. The funding, totaling over a half a million euros, covered the costs of restoring the buildings in which the Center was located and carefully transforming them to be used as offices, without altering their historical value. It also covered the overhead expenses for the first five years of activity. Self-sustainability after the five years came as a condition for the funding from both the Stability Pact and *ifa*, and Martin's solution was to open a youth hostel (which could be used directly by the Center in its projects, cutting down on costs), a restaurant (that would serve the hostel as well as other tourists and locals), and a bar/pub (which they called 'Culture Pub,' and was meant to be a venue for cultural activities like concerts and poetry nights).

The main house in the group was kept in a condition that tries to approximate an older, 'original' appearance, with a wooden shingles roof, featured on all promotional

---

74 "The Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa) operates worldwide to promote artistic exchange and dialogue between civil societies and to provide information about foreign cultural policy. The Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e. V. (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations) is funded by the German Foreign Office, the State of Baden-Wurttemberg and the City of Stuttgart." From http://typo3.ifa.webart.de/en/info/nachrichten-presseschau/ifahome/ , accessed January 3, 2008. Ifa sends representatives to towns in Romania (mainly in Transylvania) that have either a sizeable German community or German cultural life.

75 The Stability Pact is a 1999 EU initiative meant to "replace the previous, reactive crisis intervention policy in South Eastern Europe with a comprehensive, long-term conflict prevention strategy." From http://www.stabilitypact.org/about/default.asp, accessed January 3, 2008. It has funded projects in the areas of democracy building (formal politics, cross-border and parliamentary co-operation), economy (energy, infrastructure, trade, investment, and employment), and security (fighting organized crime, stabilizing population movements). The funding that the Center received dates from the early, less structured years of the Pact, when its funders were particularly concerned with ethnic stability.

materials as "the only shingles roof that has survived in the citadel" next to somewhat misleading references to the house's age. The other houses were mostly left alone structurally, but divided a little differently in order to accommodate the new use and indoor bathrooms. The tall attic in one of the buildings—characteristic of the Saxon architecture in the area—was converted into another floor for hostel rooms. All buildings used to be residential, and the tenants, including Diana (who became Martin's wife) and her family, had to move away. Diana's family was offered a little old house, not too far away from the center of the town, and they were all trying to save up money to buy it. Three of the buildings share a small cobblestone courtyard, filled with wooden tables and benches in the summer.

From what I've heard, the first years of the Center's existence were quite glamorous. The employees—most with college degrees—had good salaries compared with what was expected for this little town. The young ones were particularly happy about being able to stay in Sighişoara instead of migrating to Tg. Mureş, Cluj, or Sibiu for college degree jobs that would pay college degree money. The Center employees had a separate existence from those of the company, Intera, as was expected, with the only meeting point being Raluca, the accountant, and Linda, the secretary. Everybody else was working on youth education projects, with part of the funding coming from the Romanian government, but their salaries and the operating expenses were paid with the German governmental money. During the same years, a large chunk of that same money was spent, under Martin's pharaohnic vision, on transforming the already existing transformations and improving the already made improvements. I witnessed this vision during the year I worked there (and the following months). Despite the now dried-up funds, Martin had part of the courtyard covered, then closed up for the winter with large walls of insulating glass, the two-year-old furniture replaced, then the new one refinished

the following year. Martin was serenely convinced that all these improvements (with money extracted from the tight and dwindling funding the Center was now receiving for particular projects) will be directly and immediately reflected in higher revenues for the restaurant and the hostel. The culmination was when Martin hired a church painter—who also doubled as a drinking buddy—to paint the vaulted ceiling in the restaurant and the wooden one in the seminar room, for (allegedly) 10,000 euros. The price seems rather steep to be real, but the enormity that the rumor is employing points to the perception of Martin's choices and leadership style. Raluca's job, as the accountant, was to clean up the murky use of money and reflect it on paper, in ways that didn't challenge any laws or donor requirements.

In 2003, when the major funding ended, the Center was supposed to be supported entirely from the revenue of the company (at least in overhead costs) and project money (funded, per project, through various grants). Tensions were running high that fall and while Martin was away, the Center personnel planned some kind of mutiny to have him fired from the top by alerting *ifa*, the steward organization, of the situation at the Center. Rumors have it that someone chirped, so when Martin came back, they had their contracts "renegotiated" and their salaries readjusted to meet the minimum wage. All, except Raluca, Linda, and Ghiță (who were able to either haggle for more money or just decide that minimum wage was enough), left for better places. One of the employees was smart and connected enough to have a physician declare him chronically ill of TB and send him on a medical leave. The Center had to pay his salary for one year, and get reimbursed by the government through a tax break, before being able to fire him.

The personnel cut would have happened anyway—maybe with other kinds of drama—and the Center functioned fine for almost one year. There were no NGO activities, so that worked well, except that the annual festival (which happened in the last

week of August) was not going to organize itself. The German Institute of Foreign Cultural Affairs was providing a large portion of the funding, and by the time I came into the picture (early June) very little had actually been done. This explains Martin's and Ghiță's enthusiasm as well as Linda's and Raluca's measured horror when I offered my labor. Despite those reactions, it turned out that my contribution was not all that valuable. I got to work on the promotional materials about the festival as well as coordinating some of the content, but mostly I did secretarial work.

The Festival

The festival, with the sub-heading "The Days of Ethnic Communities in Romania," was meant to bring together representatives of all (or at least most) ethnic communities in Romania for performances of traditional music and dance, exhibitions and workshops on crafts and other kinds of material culture, as well as a small conference.

The larger political context of the festival brought together several, quite diverging, approaches to ethnic politics.

The Romanian emphasis on historicity (Verdery, 1991) surfaced through the official ethnic minority status, turned, in the past years, into limited political capital: funds from the government that need to be shared among all recognized minorities, one guaranteed seat in the lower chamber of the parliament for every minority group. There is no law that clearly defines what a national minority is, but the relevant suite of laws, combined, point to a limited number of minorities, recognized as such through a strong lobby as well as historical evidence of a continued and significant tenure on Romanian territory for about one hundred years[76]. The already declared minorities have a

76 According to current laws, in Romania there are no clear procedures for recognizing an ethnic community as a national minority. The Romanian Constitution (re-published), Law no. 67/2004 regarding local administration election,

considerable investment in controlling who enters the pool and how resources get distributed, mainly through *Departamentul pentru Relații Interetnice/* the Department for Interethnic Relations[77] (DIR) and its sponsored programs.

That year (2004), the DIR was not contributing to the festival, but it did in 2005, and both years a lot of energy was put into negotiating what ethnic groups could participate and how the money was spent. The debates circled around the Armâni, an ethnic group not officially considered a minority, despite the large public presence and an almost century long history in Romania. The other, newer, groups like the Kurds, the Chinese, and several African immigrant communities couldn't even be included in the festival negotiations: the representatives of the participating historical minorities almost mauled me and Martin after we asked some—we thought—innocent questions about those possibilities.

The ethnic *minority* status was a political solution, arrived at through years of fights and negotiations, but it wasn't representative of the popular feelings of the majority of the Romanian population. With a general background of historical tensions between the Hungarians and the Romanians sharing the region, as well as fearful perceptions about the EU pressures for ethnic 'emancipation,' many Romanians perceived the seats in the Parliament, the implementation of an education system in the recognized minority

---

with all the further modifications and additions, Law no. 373/2004 regarding the election of representatives for the Lower Chamber and the Senat, the Government law no. 589/2001 regarding the National Minorities Council, offer an interpretation of "national minorities" and of "organizations of citizens belonging to national minorities in Romania." From the texts of all these laws, what we have is a system of protection of Romanian citizens as members of national minorities, and not a procedure for deciding which ethnic community is a national minority.

The Government las no. 99/2007 has a list of all the organizations of ethnic minorities that can receive public funds (also see http://www.dri.ro). DRI has initiated the procedure for adopting a law that would define a national minority this way: "Art. 3 By 'national minority' we understand any community of Romanian citizens, that has been living on Romanian territory from the moment the Romanian modern state was founded, which is numerically inferior to the Romanian populations, has its own ethnic identity, expressed through culture, language, or religion, and which it wants to preserve, express, and develop."

[77] The Department for Interethnic Relations is an independent governmental entity (it does not belong to any Ministry) that administers governmental programs aimed at national minorities, allocates budgets for minority-run projects, advises the Prime Minister on minority related issues, and develops new legislation regarding the national minorities.

languages, as well as the money spent for cultural projects as undeserved privileges in a zero-sum-game that took money and rights away from the Romanian majority.

The German money that was coming in for the festival had other kinds of visions attached to it, Martin being a rather reluctant participant. First, there was an interest in (intangible) heritage preservation, tied to fears of a dying German culture in Transylvania. *Ifa* and other German organizations were heavily involved in the area as well as several large cities, through establishing German cultural centers, financing language programs, and supporting German cultural performances. There was also an active attempt to continue what was perceived as a historically benevolent ethnic/national presence at both local level (vis-à-vis the Romanian and Hungarian tensions) and regionally (managing the legacy of WWII interventions). There was probably a filtering through of the EU multicultural politics, with their celebration of colorful, plural cultures, erasing ethnic conflict through song and dance, and offering cultural solutions to racism and xenophobia while closing all eyes to historical causes for these ethnic/racial situations. The festival was not necessarily about solutions and reparations, but rather about moving on, through carefully weaved surfaces and manicured identities, stuck mostly in a folkloric past and populated with recognizable costumes and sounds.

But, despite this uneasiness, Martin cultivated the relationship between the Center and the various partners and funders, and the title "The Days of Ethnic Communities in Romania" was therefore carefully chosen. Martin felt caught between all these politics and also struggling with his own, rather progressive, vision. He kept saying that he doesn't want to have a "folkloric" festival, that he doesn't want to show all these cultures frozen in the past, but living. He objected to the word "minority" and pushed for the most inclusive, but still problematic "community," which we picked up and stubbornly used during planning as well as in our publicity materials. This was part of Martin's

attempt to partially gain some measure of flexibility vis-à-vis the institutional and political structures that the festival depended on by internationalizing it, making it Europe/regional relevant, rather than nationally relevant. He tried to bring in foreign performers—in particular representatives of ethnic communities from other countries—and integrate them into the festival.

The festival was able to exist despite the discrepancies in the variously invoked interpretations of ethnicity as well as approaches to ethnic politics. In fact, the festival was able to exist precisely because of them: it brought together different funding programs that wouldn't have otherwise met each other, produced a large budget that wouldn't have been supported from one source one, and created a solution that motivated its further existence. Most of the monies that came in, and in particular the governmental money, were connected to (intangible) heritage preservation programs which saw the historical citadel of Sighişoara as a privileged space where such a project could be carried out.

The budgets of the early years were outrageous for a struggling Romania, and they reached, in 2005, about 50,000 euros a year. With this money, the Center had the task of planning the festival (including several preparatory meetings with representatives of all participating communities), setting up the performance and exhibition spaces (including renting stage equipment), hosting and feeding about 800 performers over the three/four days of the festival, and promoting the event. The largest chunk of the budget went to room and board for participants, spread over some of the hotels and cheaper restaurants and cafeterias in town. Every year, though, a larger and larger chunk seemed to be poured into Intera, the Center's own hostel and restaurant, to the extent that in 2007, the format of the festival was changed to a ten-day-long event, so that most participants could be housed in the Center's hostel. Thus, the "cultural" money was easily recycled

into the other side of the organization, Intera, through legal and transparent contracts and transactions.

Some more money was extracted from the festival through less transparent personal kick-backs for offering housing and food contracts to particular hotels and restaurants as well as for closing sponsorship contracts. Ghiță, in particular, scrambled for such sponsorships and allocated 10 percent to his own pocket. Also, Intera, invested with special powers by the Center as well as the City Hall, charged street vendors authorization fees for doing business in the areas designated for festival use (selling food, drinks, souvenirs). They all happily paid, taking advantage of the crowds gathered for entertainment.

The main financer of the festival had made its requests and own limitations known throughout the years. It expected the festival to eventually gain some kind of financial sustainability and to be supported solely by the Center through its own funds or funds independently attracted from other financing organizations. Involving the DIR and other governmental and non-governmental organizations was a result of those requests as well as of the cuts in funds that ensued. The process of accessing Romanian governmental funds often meant entering informal networks and participating in practices that moved large amounts of money—made available through a new interest in "culture" and the new practical language of projects—along paths that coincided with the personal interests of people controlling those public budgets. For years, the money that came from the Ministry of Culture was partly returned to the responsible official by hiring and overpaying his son for some pre-printing work for promotional materials or publications for the festival (700 euros for two days worth of work).

The festival was, in fact, a surge of livelihood—financial and emotional—for Intera. Right after the festival, rents were paid for the past few months and a few months

in advance, other debts were honored, and Martin's pharaohnic impulses were satisfied through more transformations of the space and more investments, especially for the Intera side of the complex. The festival money and happiness would last until the beginning of the winter, when workers, cooks, and waiters either were laid off or took a pay cut in exchange for the certainty of keeping their job. People within the organization—in particular Martin and his wife—would extract some funds through curious contracts that read "For Various Services" charged, for several months after the festival, by a company whose name coincided with Martin's last name.

In the last few years, the Center had to confront the possibility that the festival could not continue, since the main financing organization had withdrawn almost completely, and attracting the necessary tens of thousands of euros seemed rather utopic. Martin and the other people in the Center and at Intera contemplated the possibility of abandoning the event (because, ironically, Intera would have to finance it, as was intended at its start-up). There was no sorrow or even worry attached to abandoning the activity that had been the closest to the Center's mission and existence. Rather, the worry was rooted in abandoning a rich opportunity to circulate money and articulate the two spheres that the Center was operating in: business and the world of NGOs. How else would the Center and Intera access that kind of a budget? How else would they sustain themselves? Being resigned to being nothing but a tourist business in the citadel seemed like cutting off opportunities.

The labor of making possibilities meet

The festival's appeal for the Center was not only in the money that was moved in and through, but also in the festival's expansive and productive existence, in the dense and lively possibilities it created: connecting the promising realm of NGO project

financing and a local economy attentive to financial in-fluxes; the social capital that came with all these and an elusive and necessary local political capital.

First of all, it turned the Center into an active broker and manager of unlikely connections between sometimes divergent and contentious discourses about ethnicity, solutions to ethnic politics, and the money attached to them. The festival existed in the space opened by the encounter between the Romanian emphasis on historicity, ethnic identity as serving the national essence, the German tolerant and non-militant cultural colonialism, and the EU inspired "all different all equal" approaches to ethnicity. The festival was where all these came unraveled through the tedious work of making them come loose, and meet, and fit, tweaking them by breaking the project proposal into pieces, rewriting it and negotiating it for every single audience, translating it so that it would *make sense* higher up in the bureaucratic hierarchy. We worked with several different versions of the project, all true in their own way, we all created our contacts in the financing and partnering institutions, advocated for the project or just pretended. We fit the non-minority Armâni in the festival and still received money from the Romanian government, we played into the intra and inter ethnic politics and, in the same time, spent the money on some popular entertainment. We represented the interests of a foreign state (Germany, through ifa as well as the Embassy) and attracted the patronage of several Romanian governmental institutions.

The Armâni were eventually included in the festival in 2004, both because DIR was not contributing financially and because the protests of the legally recognized minorities were rather mild and softened by the recognition that each community's inclusion in the festival was ultimately a favor. In 2005 we had to deal with concerted pressures from the DIR (who was contributing a hefty chunk of the room and board budget) and some of the minority representatives. The resolution that the Armâni would

participate in 2005, as well, slowly grew out of the exhaustion and mutual acceptance that come through lengthy negotiations. It was a solution that connected the firm and seemingly inflexible stands that each party took: Martin (backed by *ifa* and a more inclusive and porous, EU inspired, vision on multiculturalism) insisted that the Armâni had to be included, and that it was the Center's, not the DIR's, festival; the DRI insisted that they could not participate in any project that would destabilize the Romanian government's policy on ethnic minorities; and several minority representatives—the one that cared enough about the issue to voice their opinions—insisted that the total resources of the festival were to be divided according to (legally recognized) *rights*, and that the Armâni simply didn't have any.

My colleague Marga and I were caught in the middle of all this, always half irritated and half confused, bouncing between emails, and phone calls, and evolving drafts of all kinds of paperwork. We started in the fall with a basic plan that we adapted to meet the formats of grant proposals for the various funders that we approached. Over the next months, the festival became a library of drafts, dead-end attempts, and finished pieces, half-brothers and sisters, second cousins or impersonators of each other, evolving mutants, with bits borrowed or slightly altered based on what worked, was remarked on, or least objected to. We kept changing them, altering each version, editing each other's writing and incorporating (and sometimes exporting to) other kinds of grants and reports that we were working on, for other projects. We fought (among ourselves but mostly with other people in the Center), worked with imaginary budgets and tried to learn from the poorly maintained folders of past editions of the festival. The DIR proposal, which we started working on in late spring, was to follow a compulsory set of headings as well as a particular way of expressing costs that maddeningly broke the final budget all the way down to *exactly who ate when and where and how much that was*. The

reimbursements documents would have to have the personal data and signatures for every person (of the almost 800 participants) and every meal; global and average estimates were just not enough. We worked mainly with one person at the DIR, emailing back and forth the proposal before submitting it for approval. The money had actually already been approved—Martin knew somebody at the DIR, connected to the German political organization as well as *ifa*, and powerful enough to move government money downstream into particular projects. But this bureaucracy was another kind of work, not about moving money, but about creating visible and legitimate traces for it, publicly blessing the connection between the Center and the DIR. Together with the DIR lady we found ways to reflect what the Center wanted in ways that the DIR wanted, including the Armâni in the festival and following logistical solutions that were somewhat different from the DIR budget requirements. The Armâni costs were to be included in another—fuzzily defined—budget category, the room and board calculations were to be done in a particular way, and the DIR was to be prominently mentioned on all publicity materials. As for the representatives of the other communities, the process of coming to peace with the Armâni's participation was laced through the personal relationships that developed developed between individual Armâni and other participants at the festival—during the festival itself, the four preparatory meetings, and other events in which they together had participated.

The success of the negotiations rested on what Anneliese Riles called the "failure of apprehension" (2000, p. 77), that is the failure to make (or allow to be) visible all the fragments, interests, participations, and negotiations that the final document actually entailed, and instead render the document as clean and transparent.

Rehearsing solutions

The festival and the Center itself were a zone of encounters and articulations, a rehearsed space that could not assume its own continuity—its continuity was constantly threatened, interrupted, disrupted, reconfigured and retextured. Our labor for making the DIR and the Center meet is just one example. Working with ifa was equally unnerving, in particular when our contact retired and our entire funding relationship with the institute—until now just assumed—had to be reconstituted out of paper, rumors, and third-party-vouched trust. By 2005, the festival was in its fifth year. For me, it was the second edition that I was involved with, but for several people at the Center, it was their fifth, as well. But, somehow, every step we took, every decision we made, felt like a combination of reinventing the wheel and a tug-of-war between whoever happened to be involved at that moment in the process. No wonder, then, that a lot of energy went into smoothing out the planning process, standardizing and policing it. I found myself sucked into these efforts, rudely insisting over the phone that I deal with the same people at the partner ethnic organizations, and have the same people sent to the preparatory meetings, all to avoid having to explain, justify, and renegotiate decisions. The intra-ethnic politics made me nervous, as well. The communities we were working with were not homogeneous, and the festival seemed to be one convenient battlefield (or at least a field of negotiation) for deciding inner hierarchies and outside representation. The Italian community had two national organizations feuding for parliamentary representation, and the Bulgarians were separated into Catholic and Orthodox; different representatives, based on where the political balance was at, were alternately assigned to attend our meetings, festivals, or to participate in the planning process.

The festival existed through rehearsals and repetitions, organizing the festival year after year, constantly trying to retrace itself and reproduce itself as a solution.

Writing the financing proposals, the housing contracts, repeatedly communicating with the various governmental organizations were all part of this process, retracing relationships between people, institutions, and resources, structuring and contouring this space.

The festival was also a space constantly rehearsed and recreated through the cultural and social labor that went into the daily working lives of the people involved with either the NGO or the company. It was rehearsed through the connections that it fostered between people, the skills and memories that were accumulated and transformed, the stories that were exchanged, the material traces the festival left on the space of the citadel and of the Center buildings.

The preparations for the following festival started almost as soon as the festival ended. There was reporting—both narrative and financial—that had to be done towards the main financers (in particular the German one, which had very precise expectations), and which was interpreted by the people working at the Center as the first step in negotiating money for the next edition. There was some planning ahead of preparatory meetings and of the general format of the festival, planning done with the slight fear that there might not be enough money.

In October 2004, the festival team started thinking formally about the next edition. The Center had asked me to stay and also hired another woman, Marga, to help, so there were eight people that were directly involved with organizing the festival: I, Marga, Linda, Raluca, Diana, Martin, Ghiță, and Mihai. We all had other responsibilities within the Center or its twin sister, Intera, but we were all going to play a role in organizing the festival. Martin was trying to formalize the team—paralleling his interest in professionalizing the organization by hiring Marga, printing promotional materials, and setting up weekly meetings—so some of the first discussions were attempting to lay

out how responsibilities and decision power should be divided up. The discussions would invariably branch out in stories and concerns that spilled outside the space set up for the festival. Drawing a clear border around what should have been festival preparation seemed impossible, as those decisions were deeply embedded within the commercial interests of Intera, the less than transparent handling of the money, as well as personal relationships and histories (sympathies and antipathies).

The festival rehearsed a model and testified to its success. The model relied, unsurprisingly, on tourism: continuing to encourage Intera's existence (through recycling the room and board part of the budget), fitting—as an event—into the commodified heritage profile of the citadel, and physically moving hundreds and hundreds of people through Sighişoara (for the participants, the festival itself as well as the preparatory meetings meant tourism).

Martin really believed in this model—recycling cultural programs money through housing and feeding participants at the Intera hostel and restaurant—and as far as I could tell he didn't see any moral dilemmas associated with the approach. He saw himself as a kind of benevolent lord, often offering employment to the destitute, lending people money, overlooking mistakes and thefts, and asking friends for favors for his employees. He saw the money brought in through the festival and other programs as keeping people employed and sustaining the livelihood of their families.

Since the Center seemed to be back on track to a true, functioning NGO—after my and Marga's hiring—Martin encouraged us to apply for grants from various governmental agencies and external, European funders. The possibilities in the field of "European" youth education seemed limitless, and it looked like we were going to have free hand as far as the content of the projects went. But, slowly, we got nudged (more or less forcefully) to proposing pretty much the same project over and over, to the

Romanian agency for youth, to the European Commission in Romania, to various European funding agencies and foundations. Martin's solution was a youth camp, hosted by the Center in the hostel and restaurant rented out from Intera. We would also hire ourselves, as well as other friends of Martin's and Ghiță's, as consultants—to teach the participants whatever they needed to be taught about interethnic peace and tolerance.

During the year I was working at the Center, we ran several of these camps, financed by either ifa or the German Embassy in Romania. The camps were German language and culture camps or exchange programs for youth from the Republic of Moldova, which was one of the new areas various German cultural institutions were interested in. Twenty to forty young people from Romania or Moldova (teenagers or in their early twenties) spent about a week in Sighişoara, with all expenses paid for by the financing institutions. Every day, they attended various classes, taught in German (and sometimes Romanian or English) by people hired by the Center locally. As expected, they were all housed in the Intera hostel and ate at the Intera restaurant, and brought in valuable cash for threateningly late bills and salaries.

Towards the end of my residency at the Center, we tried to obtain funding for a new project that was to transform the little park at the end of the street—overgrown with weeds and furnished with old swings and benches—into a playground. It could be a castle—Martin suggested—and the Center would also build a large wooden patio where Intera would serve drinks and food, so parents could watch their children play.

This is how we were thinking—sincerely proposing projects that would solve real or imagined problems, and attempting to bring resources into a circuit that sustained not only the Center, but the commercial company, as well. The Center and Intera were the muddy space where all kinds of money and people met, loosing each other's trace and transforming into each other.

Articulations

"I have some news," Marga told me as soon as Sanda left the room, mumbling. "Diana is going to kill me. Just wait and see, she'll say I had planned this all along."

We were in the little improvised office that I had walked into, about seven months before, looking for a job. In the meantime, Martin had added another small desk to the right, and declared the strange handmade piece of furniture against the back wall, a desk, as well. It was in the middle of the winter, and since I was working in Linda's place (she was working in Germany as house help for three months to make some extra money), Martin decided that there was no reason to heat up the whole attic just for Marga. So the three of us—Marga, Sanda, and I—were crammed into the tight office, with barely enough space to push our chairs back, and constantly hitting our elbows against the piles of files and various objects left there by Intra employees "for a few minutes only."

I was playing secretary, and grant writer, and reservations clerk. I was making photocopies for random people who came in sent by the Town Hall (there were no other photo copiers in the citadel), I was signing the invoices for merchandise that came in for Intera, faxing orders, negotiating deals with travel agents, and looking for Sanda myself if the Intera employees couldn't find her. A couple of times—caught in the middle of a crisis—I helped clean rooms and change sheets. Marga was doing pretty much the same thing, often helping the overworked and overwhelmed Sanda. Both Marga and I were hired to work for the Center—to prepare the festival, write grants for new projects and run the existing ones—and we stubbornly tried, every day, to do Center-related work.

The Center's money was flowing through our bodies and our labor into the sister company, Intera—partly because we were explicitly expected to do all these things even though they were not part of our job descriptions, and partly because we couldn't

possibly share the same space, day after day, with other people, and not extend our help to them when it was needed. Of course, coloring our behavior was the guilt of our 'unproductive' office work—not visibly bringing in money like the waiters, cooks, cleaning people and all the others (the festival money was considered more of a given). Our labor was somewhere in between, and so were the pens and paper bought sometimes for projects and used by everyone, and the food paid for by Intera and fed (as an employee benefit) to all people working in the three-building complex. In between was the heat and electricity bill, and Linda's normal work, and Raluca's, and the rent, the building improvements, and the labor of other people who just did what was needed at that moment, cleaning, repairing, serving food—even if it wasn't really their job.

"I think I'm pregnant," Marga continued. She was happy, but a little worried about how she was going to break the news to everyone. Only the week before, during our daily employee lunch, when teased by a handyman because of her weight gain, she denied any possibility of pregnancy in front of everyone.

Her pregnancy, indeed, caused quite a stir. Romanian law required, at that time, the employer to pay the new parent a fixed income (about four times the minimum wage) for two years, if the pregnant mother had been employed (by anyone) and paid social security contributions for ten out of the past twelve months. The employer would have that amount of money deducted from its own contribution to the state, and in the end the money would even out. The problem was that, because of the small number of employees, the Center's contribution to the fund was too small to balance—in the short term—the money paid to Marga.

A small crisis ensued, and so did accusations that Marga had known all along that she wanted to get pregnant and used the Center as a convenient haven. She couldn't be fired now, and the Center was possibly stuck with a negative cash flow for the couple of

years to come. In the end, they all reached a compromise: Marga would quit her job at the Center and get hired by Intera. Papers were quickly done, and Marga switched—on paper—from one employer to another, without anything changing in what she did while at work.

Linda used to work for the Center, as well, and switched over to Intera when the *ifa* funding dried up. As for myself, although I was working for the Center, I got paid from the Intera murky money (since I wasn't hired legally until mid fall anyway) until the festival financers sent their contributions to the Center. In fact, Diana (the Intera manager and Martin's wife) was the one in charge of handing out salaries to both Intera and the NGO employees, in cash, from a secure drawer in her desk. When time came, I had to go up to her office, close the door behind me, and sign two sets of papers, one for the state, and one for Diana. Every time, she opened the drawer, pulled out of stack of bills, and counted out what I had earned.

The common stack of bills from which we all got paid was one way the financial connections between the NGO and the company were made visible. Collected from sales in the restaurant, the bar, and the hostel, the bills made their way up to Diana every evening, before she left, and in the morning, when she came to work again. Other connections—like our labor—were lived, transferred, and accumulated quietly, living traces not on paper, but in our understandings of how our "place" worked and how we were connected to each other.

The buildings in which both the Center and Intera were housed were also the physical space in which this murkiness could unfold and find its way into practice. They were a shared, daily space that made the slippage from the NGO to the company and back fade into routine and become assumed and almost invisible.

CONCLUSION

We can think, then, of the Center, and not just the festival, as a space of articulation, or rather a series of intersecting and overlapping spaces, with soft, malleable contours, and navigable structures; a space of productive repetition. Articulations—and for that matter everything that is populating it, practices, imaginations, utterances—do not just exist, they happen, and it's the labor that goes into all these processes to which that I wanted to draw your attention. This is the labor that moves money through reproducing and tweaking solutions, through bodies, spaces, and objects, it's a labor that sustains itself through the conditions of its existence, the necessity to close gaps, solve problems, find solutions. It's not just the worlds of NGOs and for-profit companies that meet here, but also those of tourism and heritage preservation, governments and other kinds of political power, local labor and foreign money, local money and foreign politics.

This kind of creative labor makes power recognize and meet itself, shape itself, coming from apparently incompatible directions and in differently scaled manifestations: different governments and organizations, businesses and political actors, directors and gatekeepers, multicultural politics and nationalist projects, preservation and development. This labor accumulates and solidifies—materially and as knowledge, as ways of seeing possibilities. It accumulates as some kind of capital that becomes attached—sometimes with uncertainty—to people, and institutions, and places, used again and again, transformed, reproduced.

The solution that I outlined in the case of the Center (setting itself up as an organization, restoring its buildings, organizing the festival, other cultural programs) is connected to resources that are available through an interest for tangible and intangible heritage, to hopes for a tempered development, mediated by civil society, and to pressures for sustainability. The solution is also tightly embedded in locally defined

possibilities, in the hopes and the limits attached to them, in a fixation on heritage and tourism, and in a sense of urgency that motivates by attracting and recycling resources into the local economy. Producing Sighişoara as a German connected space is at the core of this process, as it marks the town and its people as "cultural," motivates interventions on the part of the German government and other organizations, and justifies requests for further involvement.

The Center and Intera participate in this fermenting zone of encounter opened by discrepancies, disjunctures, and distances between foreign donors, local recipients, and a spongy local economy. The catalyst, as I have already pointed out throughout the chapter, is a by now wide-spread concern with financial sustainability (discussed in the literature mainly in terms of microcredits and microfinance) (Dichter, 1997; Hulme & Edwards, 1997): donors want guarantees that NGOs will survive beyond the grant cycle and that they will produce lasting results. The promise of sustainability is made tangible through plans for generating income—in the neoliberal fashion—through for-profit activities. With detailed examples from Bangladesh, Devine describes how these requests and pressures for sustainability have paradoxical results, moving organizations away from fulfilling the mission that was attached to the initial funding (Devine, 2003).

In the Sighişoara area—actually, in the entire Saxon triangle—sustainability has been the hallmark of all high-profile foreign development initiatives, so much that in November 2004, MET (a London based NGO operating in the area) organized a sustainability conference in Sighişoara, inviting representatives of the local and central administration, local and regional NGOs, possible foreign donors and large supranational development agencies. The project presentations and discussions circled stubbornly around heritage protection and tourism as the most viable sustainable solutions. MET itself—operating in the Saxon villages in the area—has anchored most of their activity in

buying and restoring old houses for closed circuit tourism, sporadically spreading into low volume organic agriculture (just like another London based NGO called ADEPT) or stewardship of natural heritage areas.

In Sighişoara and the surrounding area, the pattern of solutions is often stuck on heritage and tourism, productively responding to worries and requests for sustainability. As this chapter has shown, the social space in which these connections between foreign and local money, people, and politics happen is not just a response to outside interventions, but an intrinsic part of the process of their involvement, as well as an endogenous root of capitalism's expansion.

Conclusion

DREAMING OF FAME AND RECOGNITION

On the night of September 9, 2004, I had my shot at fame. For the Sighişoara citadel, it wasn't its first or last chance. With all the pictures people have taken over the past fifteen years, with all the mentions in every tourist guide about Romania, Eastern Europe, or "dark tourism" in general, Sighişoara has become more famous than I'll ever be. Its "medievalness," with its permissible invitation for people to attach their meanings and interpretations about history, the human scale of its somewhat monumental architecture, the unevenness and lack of modernist geometry have all made the citadel the darling of cameras and visual imaginations. By the time I started my fieldwork, several international films had already been shot there—all about vampires, of course—and left their traces in people's memories and stories.

In between an awkward pride and a mild outrage, the stories about these films, or, rather, these filmings, focused on an appreciation for the recognition that the town was receiving for its beauty and, in the same time, on the disappointment that this recognition had to be stubbornly tied to gruesome plots and imagery, all foreign to local realities. Some of the younger people that I talked to have taken part in the filmings, as badly paid and overworked extras, and their stories had the same mixed taste of excitement, sadness, and resignation.

So, on September 9, 2004, I had my own chance. I was excited to take part in what looked like a big production, to call it "fieldwork," and access, at least partially, the experiences of those that have done this before me. I went in with the same mixed taste in my mouth, aware of my contribution to perpetuating a particular interpretation of the "medievalness" of the place (bloody, dirty, and dark) and in the same time delighted at

being included in the magic of the foreign films that have been pouring in since 1990 (and before, mostly illegally) and have drowned out the local film production.

Two weeks before, I had signed up to be an extra for "BloodRayne," a film that nobody had any idea what it actually was about, and which was going to be filmed somewhere in the citadel. Fifty more people did the same, and looking at them, I realized that the town had learned from its previous experiences (bad pay, long hours): most of them were poor, unemployed, and either very young or very old.

First, early afternoon, we all had to sign up, turn in our IDs in exchange for the "costumes" (dirty "peasant" clothes and even dirtier shoes), and walk through the make-up and hair trailers. The confiscation of the ID cards was actually an illegal practice, sheepishly accepted by everyone in the long line, in exchange for the equivalent of the seven dollars we were going to be paid at the end of each of the two days of filming.

We started at 6 PM and I quit after twelve hours—convinced that no dissertation in the world is worth standing around in the cold September night and being barked at orders every twenty minutes. I was lucky and privileged for being successful in my verbal (and almost physical) attack on the ID custodian, but most of the few people who have tried that before me were refused. I read my success as connected to the intelligibility of my class and also to my privileged willingness to give up the day's payment in exchange for my damn ID card.

During the twelve hours, the extra-handling crew (Romanian) herded us between the two filming spots (Piața Cetății, next to *Casa cu Cerb*, and the area in front of *Casa Vlad Dracul*) and the pen (the Town Hall side yard) with yells that included insults and less-than-polite orders. For the first part of the night, we were kept captive in the yard, surrounded by the wrought iron fence and sitting on long wooden benches, waiting for calls like "I need six prostitutes and five peasants." We would be moved back and forth,

but most of the time we spent waiting. Many people were upset, mumbling curses below their breath, and louder as the night progressed. But, they stayed.

Midway through the night, we got fed simple sandwiches (two slices of bread and a slice of salami/bologna/cheese) in our half of the yard, which we chewed on, looking yearningly towards the other half and its catered dinner with hot food, cake, and fruit salad (for the crew and cast).

Illustration 18: BloodRayne—extras waiting patiently to start being pushed around.

The preparations for filming started earlier in the day and brought—it seemed, then—a beautiful energy to the main square. I saw the star trailers being brought in, Geraldine Chaplin walking across the square, and mountains of expensive professional equipment being set up. A small part of the citadel (the walkway under the Clock Tower) was closed off to the public, but I had seen—over the previous few days—strange little tents being set up on the side of the walls, made out of old tarps and old things in general.

Despite all the disappointment of the first day of filming, which I tried to share with Linda and some other women, the citadel seemed transformed, more important, different. There was a sense of pride, of feeling relevant, *în rând cu lumea* (aligned with the rest of the world) that came from the aura of the film's production mixing in, promisingly, with whatever the citadel had to offer.

I did not go back for the second night of filming, but I watched it for a little while, until I was pushed away by the security team. The following morning, all the equipment had been packed and moved. The trailers were gone, and so was the crew.

Linda was sour—her teenage son took part in the filming, as well, and was exhausted and sick, and she had to walk up to the citadel through the former set, dismembered, dirty, and abandoned.

As medieval as it was, the citadel was not quite medieval enough for the film. In preparation for the two days of shooting, all the traffic signs were cut off and all the lighting removed, and several truckloads of dirt, hay, and—people insisted—manure were dumped in Piața Muzeului and in the stone walkway under the Clock Tower. Part of the citadel was now chocking, literally, under a mound of reddish dirt, waiting to be cleaned by the Town Hall, which allegedly received some extra money to deal with the "remains" of the set.

For the following year or so, the dirt and hay was diligently swept by the underpaid street cleaners, stuck stubbornly to the cobblestones and all the cracks and nooks in between, and turned into a clayey mud every time it rained, taken home on the soles of everybody's shoes. It stained the snow red, it clogged the decrepit city drainage system, and made the locals get irritated at the tourists' remarks about how dirty the citadel was.

Illustration 19: Not medieval enough.

Illustration 20: BloodRayne—Medieval enough.

Vera—who was running one of the hotels where the cast stayed—spent the next few days swearing that she will never make the same mistake again. She told me that she

would had forgone the financial gain, if she had known she would have to deal with severely trashed rooms and damaged antique furniture.

For a couple of weeks, at the center of my conversation with three of my friends (who also participated in the filming) was an obsessive concern with the health of our feet, as we were all convinced we caught some terrible fungus from the disgusting shoes we had to wear. A friend of mine, who worked for a local radio station, caught and carried, for a while, a terrible cold, from shivering for hours that first night.

A METAPHOR

I see the episode as a sad, yet comic metaphor for some of the transformations that Sighişoara itself is undergoing, and especially for the position it finds itself in, structurally.

I see the vulnerability inherent in desire, the doors left open and unguarded, not out of naïveté, but out of an active, calculated hope. People in Sighişoara feel equally and doubly flattered and irritated by the attention the citadel is receiving through tourism, festivals, and the occasional film, the last one being *Transylvania*, directed by Tony Gatlif (France, 2006). Doubly, because people understand not only that there are costs and benefits to this, but also that the citadel's value has a weight and that this value is predicated upon certain understandings of the local history, at the expense of others.

In the middle of all this are the *medieval* and its awesome power of translation, of guiding the imagination from one interpretation to the other and materially transforming the space. Translation is both material and productive, creating and justifying connections, allowing them to *make sense*.

The vaguely peasant clothes used as costumes were a confusing—for anyone that tried to place them—mix of old peasant shirts collected from villages in southern

Romania (and not Transylvania), hippy looking stage costumes, and all kinds of worn out accessories (shoes, belts, scarves wrapped around the waist). The main actors were wearing tight leather pants and dramatic capes, and some of the "prostitutes" were wearing old, trashed, and revealing night gowns. *Old*, *dirty*, and *rustic* were used to conjure up a remote place and time, conveniently overlapping with the ambiguous and dark imaginings of Transylvania, medieval Eastern Europe, and the geographical and historical edge of the continent, in general.

Medieval surfaces consistently in the local attempts to prepare the citadel for tourist consumption, translating, in anticipation, local and regional cultural resources into forms that—maybe—will be intelligible to visiting eyes and sensibilities. A generic *rustic* resonates with the autochthonous national imagination, which has invested for years the folkloric (and the Romanian folkloric, in particular) with value. Many decorations in the citadel, and many of the souvenirs that are being sold normally and during events evoke this style, sometimes out of an objective necessity (this is what is available on the wholesale market, and this is how the market itself has been educated, making the sales of these souvenirs predictable and relatively safe).

The *medieval* has, then, the power of articulating in unthreatening ways the various ethnic/national identities attached to this region, via a fantastic, ambiguous past. The citadel is also described as "medieval" in the tourist brochures and catalogues, and the main festival, in the last week of July, is called, alternately, the "Medieval Art Festival" or the "Medieval Sighişoara Festival."

Medieval intersects Western imagination and permits Dracula to exist and be attached to Sighişoara, albeit in contested ways; in the same time, it claims valid connections to a European past, banking on the Western nostalgic desires that seem to be fueling most of the cultural tourism in Europe.

Medieval, then, occupies this productive space of translation and it conceals lingering and emerging hierarchies, and the social relations that make them possible. It relies on insisting on a somewhat German history—and future—of the place, on constantly gauging and guessing the desires of the foreign gaze, and submitting to solutions that address those desires.

The two days of filming *BloodRayne* in the citadel (for two small scenes that barely made it into the final cut) speak of the developmental dynamics at work in Sighişoara and its surroundings, stubbornly relying on the built heritage as a resource and structurally getting stuck at the bottom of most economic arrangements (lower paying jobs, lack of developmental alternatives, submitting to demeaning and disturbing self-representations).

The people that I talked to welcomed, ambivalently, the filming in the same way they welcome tourists: decrying the transformations that the citadel is undergoing, and in the same time desiring participation, a role, in the great and glittery production of global capitalism. People are not stupid nor powerless; they realize, with a heavy sigh, the position that they find themselves in, the heavier weight they carry, and how their town and their lives are left assaulted in the process.

But, how is this different from any other tourist destination in any second or third world country (and some enclaves in the first world, as well)? What can we learn from Sighişoara that we can't from the other tourist sites?

As this dissertation has shown, the specificity of the case lies in its ethnic, geographical, and historical location, in precisely how local desires have been constructed and maintained in relationship not only to a common, global, development project, but also to historical experiences of inclusion, exclusion, and tolerated participation in various national, imperial, and continental projects.

Made visible through the intensity of the Dracula Park episode, these histories and the possibilities for the future that they feed work through the built landscape of the citadel and through the lives of the people connected to it. What gets transformed—profoundly—is not only the physical buildings of the citadel and the old town, but also the very way the human and physical landscape is conceptualized. By way of all the desires circulating to and from a broadly understood "outside" and by way of the enabling flows of money and other kinds of value, the rich local reality gets productively patterned along certain solutions, one of them being the NGO-tourist business symbiosis that I described in the fourth chapter.

I insist that we try to understand the local reality as a product not only of the structural, ethnic and economic orders that intersect here, but also of the generative power of desire, working on closing perceived gaps and lags, uncomfortable differences, and incongruous arrangements, making the citadel more medieval in several different ways, moving in and out of the houses, and finding ways to invite, resist, or negotiate the more or less glamorous expansion of capitalism.

There are more ways to explore the force of desire—which I left open for reasons connected to my positioning and the limits of what I can speak about. I would be interested in understanding the nostalgic migration of Germans from Germany into this Transylvanian region (the Saxon triangle). Most of them have no ancestral connections to the area, but they decide to move here temporarily or permanently: as interns or permanent employees working with local NGOs, small investors, city people buying houses in the decrepit Saxon villages and living off the land, traditional apprentices living off their labor in a picturesque re-enactment of Middle Age professional rites of passage, people buying houses and transforming them into bed and breakfasts, and so on. Many of these people don't need to ever learn Romanian or to really adapt to the local

bureaucratic realities, as they have all the support they need from the local and the more established diasporic German community.

THE WORK OF THIS DISSERTATION

In a 2000 review article, Thomas C. Wolfe examines the state of the anthropology of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, which he finds as in need of a more "reflexive concern with disciplinarity" (p. 197). He gently accuses some of the anthropologists working in the subfield as producing something closer to ethnographic reports than to complex ethnographies, and as theorizing narrowly and unreflexively instead of engaging in conversations across different theoretical discourses (the two he mentions are the "political" and the "economic"). He admits that the situation is rooted in the very economy of the academia (forced to publish often and quickly, resulting in article length works rather than books) and in the changing nature of information (easier access, faster circulation, etc). I interpret his nervousness as symptomatic of the ambiguity this social and geographic space finds itself in, and also of the intellectual difficulty and awkwardness of engaging with it. Wolfe points to studying *knowledge* and *ways of knowing*, *governmentality* and *regimes of truth* (rather than more traditional anthropological concepts and theories) as a kind of panacea for curing the heterogeneity and the fragmentation present in the subfield.

I don't want to dismiss his solution—but my sense is that, in its hopeful formulation, it seems utopic and gets away from rather than closer to the great potential this part of the world has for the field of anthropology.

I suggest we start with the very inconsistencies and gaps that make us intellectually uncomfortable, with what we can't immediately understand or fit into neat meta-narratives. I suggest we look for continuities where history tells us there are

disruptions, and for gaps where we think we see seamless lines. I suggest, also, that we focus on the cultural work that happens in those critical spaces, doing the same kinds of cultural analysis we would expect to be doing in other parts of the world.

What I think is missing from this subfield—and will surely be sprouting very soon with the coming generations of 'native' Eastern European anthropologists—is a more intimate and affective engagement with the 'field' (whatever that is), something that can happen only through a sincere and vulnerable understanding of the stakes connected to producing and circulating knowledge about this part of the world. I am asking both for more reflexivity and more political involvement, in the sense of recognizing that our very presence and labor—as anthropologists—is part and parcel of the processes we are describing.

In the case of the anthropology of Romania, part of the difficulty lies in how small and patchy the corpus of work is. Throughout this project, I often felt obligated to produce the kind of basic, careful ground work that attempts to describe a community, its boundaries and its inner logics, and to contribute another humble brick to the foundation of later projects that are going to rival—decades and decades later—works in more consecrated areas of anthropology.

But, that is not the kind of anthropologist that I am.

Young and restless, I didn't have the patience for that. Instead, I chose to be self-serving and base my curiosity in questions that connected Sighişoara to processes that I myself am a sign of. I believe we can't understand Sighişoara, or any place in Romania, as separate from a global reality, in the same way we can't understand "socialism" or "post-socialism" as separate from late capitalism. I am very well aware that, because of this, I might have traded off the depth and richness that one might expect from an ethnography of a far away, relatively undocumented place.

The work that this dissertation is doing is the middle-ground, the conversation between the uniqueness and specificity of the site and what makes it relevant for its most likely readers. It is as much about Sighişoara as it is about the kind of world that we live in, a world that moves a person like me from Romania to the U.S. for education and the uncertain fulfillment of half understood desires, a world that creates the hope of development through the very suppression of its possibilities.

The main contribution that this work is bringing to the anthropology of Eastern Europe, the ethnography of post-socialism, and anthropology in general, is proposing a mode of analysis that breaks the lines that separate constructions and processes like ethnicity, transition, socialism, and capitalism, and showing how they work through each other and through historical continuities and tactical disruptions.

I proposed desire as a useful device for making visible the cultural motivations that fueled the events that I witnessed and described, and its productive force as one compelling source for the cultural and social dynamics at work not only in this town, but, in some ways, in global capitalism as a whole.

Katherine Verdery proposes, as a solution for post-socialist studies' fragmentation and relative stagnation, a look at post-colonial studies for inspiration, treating the former Soviet Union as some kind of Empire. I find her suggestion a bit gimmicky, but not completely uninspired, since it would lead us to discussing "the full incorporation of both the former colonies *and* the former socialist block into a global capitalist economy" (Verdery, 2002, p. 18), which is where I see my project situated. Her solution is oriented mostly towards historical economic analysis and the attempt to revise our very understandings of twentieth century capitalism and how its constitution and functioning was tightly connected to the existence of socialism. Here is where I diverge—while I subscribe to recognizing the importance of historical analysis, I think that ignoring how

post-socialist spaces are *now* part of the contemporary, current, global capitalism would reproduce the same kinds of disciplinary hierarchies between anthropology and anthropology of post-socialism that many are complaining about (see Hann, 2002, esp. the introduction).[78]

In the same essay, Verdery is advocating an orientation that "would give voice to the 'natives' as analysts of their own condition. Although it is not yet clear who would be the Franz Fanon of this corpus, his or her forerunners surely include the Eastern European dissidents and other scholars – people like Rudolph Bahro, Pavel Campeanu, Györgi Konrad, István Rev, Jadwiga Staniszkis, and Ivan Szelenyi – whose writing spurred us to seek an understanding of socialism different from that offered by Cold War categories" (p. 20).

I am no Franz Fanon, but I think I bring an (admittedly problematic) native point of view (forged somewhere in between an indigenous consciousness and a colonized subjectivity), which is something that has been definitely missing from the Western anthropology of Eastern Europe. Michał Buchowski (2007) admonishes Western anthropologists for knowingly excluding this point of view and the contribution of Eastern European anthropologists. I am a little confused about where I can position myself—he clearly aligns the native point of view not only with national origin and everyday experience, but also with disciplinary training within what he calls the "continental ethnological tradition" (p. 7).

In this context, I see the work of this dissertation as a metaphor for the desire for recognition, for full participation in the imagined glamour of capitalism—with all its problematic implications—that many people in Sighişoara have. With this dissertation, I was hoping to pull—on native-inspired terms—my home out of the area studies model,

[78] The anthropology of China has actually been very successful in achieving that lately.

that of incestuous conversations, and break into the larger and changing pond of "world anthropologies" (Ribeiro & Escobar, 2006).

My approach was rather veiled at times: not to find a formula or identify exact relationships, but rather to illuminate the processes that I am describing from different angles, by navigating through the different and very consequential developmental imaginaries that are at work in Transylvania, and in particular in the Sighişoara region.

In that sense, I believe the main contribution that I am bringing is the very analysis that I am doing. Far from me to claim that this analysis is revolutionary in itself or even within the broader field of anthropology, but it opens up new analytical possibilities for the scholarship on Eastern Europe.

First, I employ a sensibility that is attuned to synchronicities, and this becomes apparent in my approach to the discussion of capitalism's expansion and in my approach to ethnicity.

I use capitalist continuities to refer not necessarily to dormant residues left over from before the socialist period and revived after 1989 with the "transition" to future capitalism. I am more interested in showing how a continuous, living engagement with the "outside," the "West," with consumer capitalism has been part of quotidian subjectivities and understandings of the world, all mediated by desire and access to mobility and possibility. Understandings of people's current relationship with development, consumption, the idea and reality of capitalism cannot be disentangled from these continuities, and my suggestion is to locate analysis precisely in these relationships.

I argue, in the same time, that it is analytically useful to approach ethnicity not just as a historical, political project (which I do, throughout the dissertation), but as a

constant relationship to the world, a relationship to various, unfolding, projects of modernity: to the nation state, to Western civilization, to capitalism, socialism, and so on. In this dissertation project, I use this approach to explore why Germanness, German heritage, German identity still drives local transformations, despite the proportionally small German presence.

Second, I see my contribution as connected to a more vulnerable and sincere understanding of the stakes in producing and circulating knowledge about this part of the world. In the context of the impressive body of critical work about and out of other third and second world spaces (like Latin America, South East Asia), I am made to feel uncomfortable by the irresponsibly detached and unreflexive analyses of post-socialist Eastern Europe, with all their claims of transparency and objectivity. Part of the explanation lies in the tradition that they are following—still indebted to Cold War categories and theories—and part, as I have already mentioned, in the timidity of the native voices.

My project was to disrupt this state of affairs and to produce an ethnography that is honest, involved, daring, and at times unexpected, a dissertation that was openly a product of my own relationship to home/the field and to the field of anthropology in general.

Works cited

NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE ARTICLES

2002, May 10. "Prințul Moştenitor al Tronului Marii Britanii consideră că Dracula Parc poate distruge stilul tradițional al Sighişoarei," in *Viața Cultelor*, no.457.

2002, April 4. "Conferința 'SOS Sighişoara' legată de proiectul 'Dracula Park'," in *Viața Cultelor*, year X, no.453.

2002, March 19. "B.O.R. se opune denumirii de Dracula Park şi legiferării prostituției," by Dan Trifu, in *Cuvântul Liber*, page 3.

2002, February 28. "Se distruge identitatea națională a României," by Cristian D. Stoiculescu, in *România Liberă*, page 14.

2002, February 27. "Din cauza potențialelor pericole ecologice Ministrul Turismului a fost somat să nu mai folosească numele GREENPEACE pentru susținerea programului," by Romulus Cristea, in *România Liberă*, page 10.

2002, February 22. "Vocea societății civile, cea care plăteşte taxe şi impozite, este ignorată," by Carmer Andrei, in *România Liberă*, page 14.

2002, February 22. "În cazul Dracula Park 'legea e doar pentru căței'—Ministrul Agathon vrea să obțină 22 de avize într-o singură săptămână," by Carmen Andrei, in *România Liberă,* page 1.

2002, February 21. "Un grup de sighişoreni s-a adresat P.F. Părinte Patriarh pentru stoparea proiectului Dracula Park," in *Viața Cultelor*, year X, no.447;

2002, February 21. "Să dea Dumezeu să ne fi înşelat noi, iar deponenții la jocul piramidal 'Dracula Park' să nu-şi piardă banii," by Petre Mihai Băcanu in *România Liberă*, page 1.

2002, February 21. "Un paradis fiscal, cu investitori aleşi pe sprânceană," by Camelia Popa, in *România Liberă*, page 14.

2002, January 27. "Mickey Mouse with Fangs," by Tom Pilston in *The Independent on Sunday*, pp. 18-21.

2001, December 28. "A new Dracula horror in Romania," by Jessica Douglas-Home in *The Wall Street Journal Europe*.

2001, December 27 – January 2, 2002. “Nouă sighişoreni din zece sunt pentru Dracula Park,” by Ioan F. Pascu, in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*, page 6.

2001, November 28 – December 4. “Gata cu vorbele. Vom lăsa buldozerele să vorbească,” by Dan Matei Agathon, in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*, page 4.

2001, November 27 – December 3. “De ce are baba coif sau de ce vor unii să-l tragă pe Dracula, pentru a doua oară, în țeapă,” by Cornel Ivanciuc, in *Academia Cațavencu*, page 3.

2001, November 19. “Ceartă PSD-PNL pe parcul de distracții: Dracula scoate dosarele,” by Mihai Toader, in *Ziua*, page 3.

2001, November 5. “Conservare şi Restaurare,” in *România Liberă*, page 14.

2001, October 31 – November 6. “Poziția primarului Sighişoarei referitoare la unele păreri contra Programului de dezvoltare turistică a zonei Sighişoara,” in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter.*

2001, October 24-30. “Pro şi contra Dracula Land,” by Ioan F. Pascu, in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter,*

2001, October 24-30. “Mesajul domnului Dan Matei Agthon, ministrul Turismului, adresat întâlnirii de la Sighişoara a etnicilor germani,” in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*.

2001, October 24. “Investitorii români şi străini pot răsufla uşurați: Duşmanii lui Dracula Park, căutați de SIE,” by Alin Bolbos and Daniel Sârbu, in *Ziua de Ardeal*.

2001, October 9. “Editorial—Draculomanie,” by Octavian Paller, in *Adevărul*.

2001, August 1-7. “Sighişoara nu are nevoie de un ‘Dracula-Land’,” by Hans Bruno Fröhlich, in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*, page 16.

2001, August 1 – 7. “Scrisoare de Protest,” in *Jurnalul Sighişoara Reporter*, page 16.

2001, July 11 – 17. “S-a hotărât: Dracula Land pe Breite!,” in *Jurnalul Sighisoara Reporter*, page 4.

BOOKS AND SCHOLARLY ARTICLES

Abramson, D. (1999). A Critical Look at NGOs and Civil Society as Means to an End in Uzbekistan. *Human Organization, 58*, 240-250.

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities : reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. New York: Verso.

Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Books.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*: University of Minnesota Press.

Baltag, G. (2004). *Sighişoara, Schässburg, Segesvár: Istoria Sighişoarei de la întemeierea oraşului până în 1945*. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Nereamia Napocae.

Barkan, E. (2000). *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Barth, F. (1969). *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co.

Berdahl, D. (1999). *Where the World Ended: Re-Unification and Identity in the German Borderland*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Berdahl, D., Bunzl, M., & Lampland, M. (Eds.). (2000). *Altering States: Ethnographies of Transition in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*: University of Michigan Press.

Blacksell, M., & Born, K. M. (2002). Private property restitution: The geographical consequences of official government policies in Central and Eastern Europe. *The Geographical Journal, 168*(2), 178-190.

Boia, L. (2001). *History and myth in Romanian consciousness*. New York: Central European University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*: Cambridge University Press.

Bridger, S., & Pine, F. (Eds.). (1998). *Surviving Post-Socialism: Local Strategies and Regional Responses in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*: Routledge.

Brubaker, R., Feischmidt, M., Fox, J., & Grancea, L. (2006). *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bruno, M. (1996). Playing the co-operation game: strategies around international aid in post-socialist Russia. In S. Bridger & F. Pine (Eds.), *Surviving post-socialism: Local strategies and regional responses in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union* (pp. 170-187). London: Routledge.

Buchowski, M. (2007). *The Invention of Postsocialist Anthropologists and Anthropology by Anthropologists.* Paper presented at the 2007 Annual SOYUZ Symposium:

Locating "Eurasia" in PostSocialist Studies: The Geopolitics of Naming (Princeton University, April 27-29, 2007).

Burawoy, M., & Verdery, K. (Eds.). (1999). *Uncertain Transition*: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing.

Cahalen Schneider, D. (2006). *Being Góral: Identity Politics and Globalization in Postsocialist Poland*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Causey, A. (1999). The Singasinga Table Lamp and the Toba Batak Art of Conflation. *The Journal of American Folklore, 112*(445), 424-436.

Certeau, M. d. (2002). *The Practice of Everyday Life*: University of California Press.

Chelcea, L. (2003). Ancestors, Domestic Groups, and the Socialist State: Housing Nationalization and Restitution in Romania. *Comparative studies in society and history, 45*(4), 714-740.

Clapham, D., & Kintrea, K. (1996). Analyzing Housing Privatization. In D. Clapham, J. Hegedus, K. Kintrea & I. Tosics (Eds.), *Housing Privatization in Eastern Europe*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Coleman, S., & Crang, M. (2002). Grounded Tourists, Travelling Theory. In S. Coleman & M. Crang (Eds.), *Tourism: Between Place and Performance*: Berghahn Books.

Comaroff, J., & Comaroff, J. L. (2001). Millennial capitalism: first thoughts on a second coming. In J. Comaroff & J. L. Comaroff (Eds.), *Millennial capitalism and the culture of neoliberalism*. Duke University Press.

Comaroff, J. L. (1987). Of Totemism and Ethnicity: Consciousness, Practice and the Signs of Inequality. *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology, 52*, 301-323.

Creed, G. (1998). *Domesticating Revolution: From Socialist Reform to Ambivalent Transition in a Bulgarian Village*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Dawidson, K. E. K. (2004). Redistributing Nationalized Housing: Impacts on Property Patterns in Timisoara, Romania. *Eurasian Geography and Economics, 45*(2), 134-156.

Dawidson, K. E. K. (2005). Geographic impacts of the political: Dealing with nationalised housing in Romania. *Political Geography, 24*, 545-567.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1983). *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: Universty of Minnesota Press.

Devine, J. (2003). The Paradox of Sustainability: Reflections of NGOs in Bangladesh. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 590, Rethinking Sustainable Development*, pp. 227-242.

Dichter, T. W. (1997). Appeasing the Gods of Sustainability: The Future of International NGOs in Microfinance. In D. Hulme & M. Edwards (Eds.), *NGOs, States and Donors: Too Close for Comfort?* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Dorst, J. D. (1989). *The Written Suburb: An American Site, an Ethnographic Dillema*: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Downey, G., & Fisher, M. S. (2006). Introduction: The Anthropology of Capital and the Frontiers of Ethnography. In M. S. Fisher & G. Downey (Eds.), *Frontiers of Capital: Ethnographic Reflections on the New Economy*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Dunn, E. C. (2004). *Privatizing Poland: Baby Food, Big Business, and the Remaking of Labor*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Eminescu, M. (2003). Scrisoarea III. In M. Eminescu (Ed.), *Poezii*. Bucureşti: Hyperion.

Escobar, A. (1984). Discourse and power in development: Michel Foucault and the relevance of his work to the Third World, *Alternatives* (Vol. 10, pp. 377-400).

Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering Development: The Making and the Unmaking of the Third World*: Princeton University Press.

Evans-Pritchard, D. (1989). How "they" see "us": Native American images of tourists. *Annals of Tourism Research, 16*, 89-105.

Ferguson, J. (1999). *Expectations of modernity: Myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fisher, W. F. (1997). Doing good? The politics and antipolitics of NGO practices. *Annual Reviews of Anthropology, 26*, 439-464.

Fjellman, J. (1992). *Vinyl leaves: Walt Disney World and America*: Westview Press.

Florescu, R., & McNally, R. T. (1973). *Dracula: A Biography of Vlad the Impaler, 1431-1476*: Hawthorn Books.

Foucault, M. (1985). *The History of Sexuality, Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure*. New York: Random House.

Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*: Knopf Publishing Group.

Gal, S. (2002). A Semiotics of the Public/Private Distinction. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies, 13*(1), 77-95.

Gal, S., & Kligman, G. (2000). *The Politics of Gender after Socialism*: Princeton University Press.

Geertz, C. (1963). The integrative revolution. In C. Geertz (Ed.), *Old Societies and New States*. New York: Free Press.

Gellner, E. (1994). *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals*. London: The Penguin Press.

Ghodsee, K. (2005). *The Red Riviera: Gender, Tourism, and Postsocialism on the Black Sea*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Greenblatt, S. (1991). *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonders of the New World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Greenwood, D. J. (1989). Culture by the Pound: An Anthropological Perspective on Tourism as Cultural Commoditization. In V. L. Smith (Ed.), *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* (2nd ed.): University of Pennsylvania Press.

Gregory, S. (2007). *The Devil behind the Mirror: Globalization and Politics in the Dominican Republic*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gupta, A. (1995). Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State. *American Ethnologist, 22*(2), 375-402.

Hackenberg, R. A. (2002). Closing the Gap Between Anthropology and Public Policy: The Route Through Cultural Heritage Development. *Human Organization, 61*(3), 288-298.

Hancock, I. (2002). *We are the Romani people/Ame sam e Rromane dzene*. Hartfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Hann, C. (1998). Introduction: the embeddedness of property. In C. Hann (Ed.), *Property relations: Renewing the anthropological tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hann, C. (Ed.). (2002). *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*. New York: Routledge.

Harvey, D. (1990). *Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*: Blackwell Publishing Professional.

Harvey, D. (2001). *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hechter, M. (1986). A rational choice approach to race and ethnic relations. In D. Mason & J. Rex (Eds.), *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations*: Cambridge University Press.

Hemment, J. (1998). Colonization or Liberation: The Paradox of NGOs in Postsocialist States *The Anthropology of East Europe Review, 16*(1).

Hulme, D., & Edwards, M. (1997). NGOs, States and Donors: An Overview. In D. Hulme & M. Edwards (Eds.), *NGOs, States and Donors: Too Close for Comfort*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Hutcheon, L. (1994). *Irony's edge: the theory and politics of irony*. London: Routledge.

Iordachi, C., & Trencsényi, B. (2003). In Search of a Usable Past: The Question of National Identity in Romanian Studies, 1990-2000. *East European Politics and Societies, 17*(3), 415-453.

Iorga, N. (1989). *Istoria Românilor din Ardeal şi Ungaria*. Bucureşti: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică

Ishkanian, A. (2003). Is the Personal Political? The Development of Armenia's NGO Sector During the Post-Soviet Period [Electronic Version]. *Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies Working Paper Series*. Retrieved December 31, 2007 from http://garnet.berkeley.edu/~bsp/publications/2003_03-ishk.pdf.

Kideckel, D. A. (1993). *The Solitude of Collectivism: Romanian Villagers to the Revolution and Beyond*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (1998). *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*: University of California Press.

Kligman, G. (1998). *The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceauşescu's Romania*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Krylova, A. (1999). Saying "Lenin" and Meaning "Party": Subversion and Laughter in Soviet and Post-Soviet Society. In *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society since Gorbachev*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Kumar, K. (1993). Civil Society: An Inquiry into the Usefulness of an Historical Term *The British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 44*(No. 3 (Sep., 1993)), pp. 375-395.

Kürti, L. (2001). *The Remote Borderland: Transylvania in the Hungarian Imagination*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Lampland, M. (1995). *The Object of Labor: Commodification in Socialist Hungary*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ledeneva, A. V. (1998). *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking and Informal Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ledeneva, A. V. (2006). *How Russia Really Works: The Informal Practices That Shaped Post-Soviet Politics and Business*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production of Space* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans. 2000 ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Linnekin, J. (1997). Consuming Cultures: tourism and the commoditization of cultural identity in the island Pacific. In M. Picard & R. E. Wood (Eds.), *Tourism, Ethnicity and the State in Asian and Pacific Societies*: University of Hawaii Press.

Lippard, L. R. (1997). *The Lure of the Local: senses of place in a multicentered society.* . The New Press.

Low, S. M. (2000). *On the plaza: the politics of public space and culture*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

MacCannel, D. (1989). *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. New York: Shocken Books.

MacCannel, D. (1992). *Empty Meeting Grounds: The Tourist Papers*: Routledge.

Machat, C. (Ed.). (2002). *Denkmaltopographie Siebenbürgen, Stadt Schäßburg 4.1/ Topografia monumentelor din Transilvania, Municipiul Sighişoara 4.1*. Köln: Rheinland-Verlag.

Mandel, R. E. (2002). Seeding civil society. In C. Hann (Ed.), *Postsocialism: Ideals, ideologies and practices in Eurasia*. New York: Routledge.

Mandel, R. E., & Humphrey, C. (Eds.). (2002). *Markets and Moralities: Ethnographies of Postsocialism.* : Berg Pub Ltd.

Mascia-Lees, F. E., Sharpe, P., & Cohen, C. B. (1989). The Postmodernist Turn in Anthropology: Cautions from a Feminist Perspective. *Signs, 15*(1), 7-33.

Massey, D. (1994). *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mbembe, P. (1992). The Banality of Power and the Aesthetics of Vulgarity in the Postcolony. *Public Culture, 4*, 1-30.

McNally, R. T., & Florescu, R. (1972). *In Search of Dracula: A True History of Dracula and Vampire Legends*. New York: New York Graphic Society.

Meethan, K. (2001). *Tourism in Global Society: Place, Culture, Consumption*: Palgrave.

Mehedinți, S. (1986). *What is Transylvania?* Miami Beach: Romanian Historical Studies.

Mitu, S. (2001). *National Identity of Romanians in Transylvania*: Central European University Press.

Nash, D. (1996). *Anthropology of Tourism*: Pergamon.

Norkunas, M. K. (1994). *The Politics of Public Memory: Tourism, History, and Ethnicity in Monterrey, California*: SUNY Press.

Ong, A. (1999). *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Ong, A. (2006). *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Pascu, I. F. (2005). *SIGHIŞOARA SCHÄßBURG*. Tg. Mures: Edipress Tipo.

Pascu, S. (1982). *A History of Transylvania*. Detroit: Wayne University Press.

Ribeiro, G. L., & Escobar, A. (2006). World Anthropologies: Disciplinary Transformations within Systems of Power. In G. L. Ribeiro & A. Escobar (Eds.), *World Anthropologies: Disciplinary Transformations within Systems of Power*. Oxford: Berg.

Ries, N. (2002). "Honest Bandits" and "Warped People": Russian Narratives about Money, Corruption, and Moral Decay. In C. J. Greenhouse, Elizabeth Mertz, Kay B. Warren (Ed.), *Ethnography in Unstable Places: Everyday Lives in Context of Dramatic Political Change*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Riles, A. (2000). *The Network Inside Out*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Rofel, L. (1999). *Other Modernities: Gendered Yearnings in China after Socialism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Roman, D. (2003). *Fragmented Identities: Popular Culture, Sex, and Everyday Life in Postcommunist Romania*: Lexington Books.

Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Sampson, S. (1996). The social life of projects: Importing civil society to Albania. In C. Hann & E. Dunn (Eds.), *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models* (pp. 121-142). New York: Routledge.

Sampson, S. (2002). Beyond transition: Rethinking elite configurations in the Balkans. In C. Hann (Ed.), *Postsocialism: Ideals, ideologies and practices in Eurasia*. New York: Routledge.

Scott, J. C. (1985). *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Shields, R. (1991). *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity*: Routledge.

Sloterdijk, P. (1987). *Critique of Cynical Reason* (M. Eldred, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Smith, D. W. (2007). Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Toward an Immanent Theory of Ethics. *Parrhesia, 2*, 66-78.

Smith, N. (1996). *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the revanchist city*. London: Routledge.

Smith, N. (2006). Gentrification Generalized: From Local Anomaly to Urban "Regeneration" as Global Urban Strategy. In M. S. Fisher & G. Downey (Eds.), *Frontiers of Capital: Ethnographic Reflections on the New Economy*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Svašek, M. (2006). Postsocialist Ownership: Emotions, Power and Morality in a Czech Village. In M. Svašek (Ed.), *Postsocialism: Politics and Emotions in Central and Eastern Europe*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Todorova, M. (1997). *Imagining the Balkans*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Todorova, M. (2004). Introduction: Learning Memory, Remembering Identity. In M. Todorova (Ed.), *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory*. New York: NYU Press.

Todorova, M. (2006). Spacing Europe: What is a historical region? *East Central Europe/ECE, 32*(1-2), 7-55.

Tosics, I., & Hegedus, J. (2003). Housing in South-Eastern Europe. In S. Lowe & S. Tsenkova (Eds.), *Housing Change in East and Central Europe: Integration or Fragmentation?* Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Tsing, A. L. (2005). *Friction: an Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Urry, J. (1995). *Consuming Places. Routledge.*: Routledge.

Verdery, K. (1983). *Transylvanian villagers : three centuries of political, economic, and ethnic change*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Verdery, K. (1991). *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania* University of California Press.

Verdery, K. (1995). Faith, hope, and Caritas in the land of the pyramids: Romania, 1990 to 1994. *Comparative studies in society and history, 37*(4), 625-669.

Verdery, K. (1996). *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Verdery, K. (1998). Property and power in Transylvania's decollectivization. In C. Hann (Ed.), *Property relations: Renewing the anthropological tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Verdery, K. (2002). Wither Postsocialism? In *Postsocialim: Ideals, Ideologies, and Practices in Eurasia*: Routledge.

Verdery, K. (2003). *The vanishing hectare: property and value in postsocialist Transylvania*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Verdery, K. (2004). The Obligations of Ownership: Restoring Rights to Land in Postsocialist Transylvania. In K. Verdery & C. Humphrey (Eds.), *Property in Question: Value Transformation in the Global Economy*. New York: Berg.

Wagner, R. (2000). Ethnic Germans in Romania. In S. Wolff (Ed.), *German Minorities in Europe: Ethnic Identity and Cultural Belonging*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Wallace, M. (1996). *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory*: Temple University Press.

Wallerstein, I. (1974). *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Academic Press.

Wedel, J. R. (2001). *Collision and Collusion: The Strange Case of Western Aid to Eastern Europe*: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wilk, R. (1995). Learning to be local in Belize: Global Systems of Common Difference. In D. Miller (Ed.), *Worlds Apart*: Routledge.

Wilson, P. C. (2003). Ethnographic Museums and Cultural Commodification: Indigenous Organizations, NGOs, and Culture as a Resource in Amazonian Ecuador. *Latin American Perspectives, 30*, pp. 162-180.

Wolf, E. R. (1982). *Europe and the People Without History* (1997 ed.). Berkeley: University of California.

Wolfe, T. C. (2000). Cultures and Communities in the Anthropology of Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 29*, 195-216.

Wolff, L. (1994). *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Yurchak, A. (1997). The Cynical Reason of Late Socialism: Power, Pretense, and the Andekdot. *Public Culture, 9*, 161-188.

Zerilli, F. M. (2006). Sentiments and/as Property Rights: Restitution and Conflict in Post-Socialist Romania. In M. Svašek (Ed.), *Postsocialism: Politics And Emotions in Central And Eastern Europe*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Zukin, S. (1995). *The Cultures of Cities*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell.

Vita

Claudia Nicoleta Câmpeanu was born in Târgu Mureş, Romania, on May 3, 1976, the daughter of Carolina Câmpeanu and Constantin Câmpeanu. In 1994, she graduated from Liceul Alexandru Papiu Ilarian in Târgu Mureş, and entered Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, receiving in 1998 a Diplomă de Licenţă in Economics. Between 1998 and 2000, she attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and in 2000 she was awarded a Master of Science degree in Advertising. In 2000, she entered The University of Texas at Austin for a Ph.D. in Communications, and, after three years of frustration, transferred to the Department of Anthropology, which has been her institutional home until graduation.

Permanent address: Piaţa Armatei, nr. 38, apt. 4, Tg. Mureş, 540196, România

This dissertation was typed by the author.